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THE
KING'S MAN.

A TALE OF SOUTH CAROLINA IN
REVOLUTIONARY TIMES.

BY A. J. H. DUGANNE.

AUTHOR OF DIME NOVEL No. 493, "THE PEON PRINCE."

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THE KING'S MAN;

A TALE OF SOUTH CAROLINA IN REVOLUTIONARY TIMES

CHAPTER I.

THE PATRIOT'S BRIDAL.

So did they
Their altar build for liberty that day.—T. H. CHIVRE.

On a June evening, in the year 1776, there was a brilliant assemblage at the mansion of John Riviere, merchant of Charleston, S. C., to witness the marriage of his niece, Louise Arnoult, with her cousin, his only son, Ernest Riviere.

Old gentlemen were present, shining in bravery of court costume, recalling splendors of the Second George's reign; with flowing white wigs, and vests of crimson—the latter color destined to fall from colonial favor. Old ladies stood erect in stiff brocades and towering head-gear, their high-heeled shoes glittering with diamond buckles. Young gallants sported powdered ringlets and delicate ruffles, their coats heavy with embroidery, and their spotless small-clothes of buff and azure, elaborately worked with gold and silver threads.

While waxen lights shone brightly, and music sounded through the spacious saloons, and the perfume of surrounding gardens was wafted into jalousied casements, the guests disposed themselves into groups, awaiting the bridal ceremony. Two young men, walking apart on a balcony, conversed in a low tone, while apparently observing the animated scene.

"I tell you, Yancey," cried the elder of the pair, "that I will yet be even with them all! Ay!"—he seemed to hiss rather than mutter—"though our fair cousin's hand and wealth are *his*, not mine, I will yet be winner in the game, _____!" The sentence closed with an oath that grated harshly on that scene, though uttered only in a whisper.

"You've got the right pluck, Atnee," returned the other young man; "I said you would carry off your disappointment like a buck, you know! The woman's but a woman, and as for the property who knows what it will be worth to him, when our turn comes—eh, Atnee?"

"Hush! But you are right, Yancey. And our turn will come before another night. Curse it, why could not this mummery have been delayed!"

"Do you think, Atnee, that there will be a fight?"

"Doubtless; and 'tis for that reason old Riviere consented to the wedding being performed this evening. Our gallant bridegroom will pass from the arms of love to the arms of—"

"Death, perhaps?" added Yancey, filling up his companion's pause, as he looked him in the face.

"There'd be one rebel less for King George to hang," muttered Atnee, cynically. "We shall have our hands full with these popinjays when the king gets his own again."

"Poor devils!" rejoined his friend, "they're to be pitied, in any case; for if the rebellion could succeed, these new-fangled notions of freedom would end in the loss of all their two-legged property, you know."

"No doubt of that, Yancey! If the Puritan vandals ever get southward, we might have a rump-parliament liberating every black in Carolina."

"And a Yankee conventicle on every plantation, perhaps Roundheads against cavaliers," said Yancey, laughing.

"Exactly—the old quarrel!" rejoined Atnee. "Their nonsense about freedom is only the psalm-smiting fanaticism of more than a century ago, and honestly come by at that; for their fathers fought against ours at Naseby and Worcester. Shame that any Southern cavalier should league with drivellers of Massachusetts Bay!"

"But our Southern Huguenots, you know—"

"Ay!" muttered Atnee, with a malediction. "These French have rebel blood in them, and 'tis their example that disgraces Carolina! We shall let out some of that French blood ere long, Yancey."

"Your uncle and cousin Ernest are true Huguenots, Atnee."

"And need bloodletting, too," muttered the young man, with a significant scowl. "But look! the priest is here, and I must act my part in the farce, as well as others! You shall see, Yancey, how gallant a groomsman your discarded lover can make!"

Speaking thus, the young man turned from his confidant, and advanced lightly into the center of a throng that now gathered in the main saloon. With handsome face arrayed in smiles, and graceful figure bowing to friends on either hand, as he placed himself beside the radiant bridegroom, Robert Atnee would never have been taken for a discarded lover, nor suspected to be, what in truth he was, one of the deepest-plotting Tories in Carolina.

Clad in sacred robes, his wide-flowing surplice depending nearly to the floor, the reverend clergyman now raised his hands and eyes, invoking a blessing upon the nuptials he was about to solemnize. On his left stood Ernest Riviere, his slight but well-knit figure attired in a suit of light-blue, worked with a border of silver vines, and lined

with fawn-colored satin. His square-toed shoes glittered with brilliants. Diamonds clasped his vest, and shone upon his knees, contrasting strongly with the plain black scabbard of his dress-sword, the only ornament of which was a ruby, gleaming upon its pommel.

Near Ernest was his father, and his cousin Robert Atnee, and at his side stood Louise, her heart audibly beating, as she felt the assuring pressure of his hand. She wore a dress of white satin, ruffed with point laces, through which her arms and neck appeared like alabaster. Clusters of pearls were netted in her dark braids of hair, and glistened also among the ringlets that fell in profusion around her polished throat. A necklace of similar gems, interspersed with sapphires, sustained a small cross of gold, and an aigrette of diamonds clasped her girdle, confining the full richness of the bridal robes. Just in her nineteenth year, this young girl united a charming simplicity with all the grace of early womanhood—that season of sunshine, when the heart uncloses, flower-like, to drink sweetness from all impressions and surroundings. She was of medium height, her figure slight but modeled with the waving symmetry that we admire in painting or statuary. Her features were calmly expressive, and to a careless observer might indicate too quiet a temperament; but one who looked into her large black eyes, of earnest depth, or marked the thoughtful breadth of her placid forehead, would feel that gentle as she appeared, her nature was capable of courage and endurance.

It was, as has been said, a June evening, laden with balm and perfume. The skies, seen through lattice and embowering pines, were thick with stars, and no presage of storm, or shadow of uprising cloud, interposed to mar the beauty and promise of that quiet night, when Louise and Ernest laid their hands together, pronouncing the solemn words which made them one.

But scarcely had the wedding-ring—emblem of endless love and constancy—been placed upon the bride's taper finger, when a sudden sound, like thunder breaking through the calm atmosphere, startled every guest with its significant vibration. It was the roar of cannon booming and reverberating in sullen distinctness. Many a cheek became pale at the moment, and many hearts stood still, as old and young exchanged glances of import, and a murmur ran from lip to lip:

"The British!"

Ernest Riviere supported the form of his bride, who clung to him convulsively.

"Courage, dearest! remember you are a soldier's wife!" he murmured, pressing a kiss upon her forehead.

"Wife!" The sweet, strange words recalled Louise to consciousness of her new relationship.

"'Tis the enemy's first gun," said the merchant Riviere. "'Tis the haughty summons of King George cast at us from the cannon's mouth."

Ernest Riviere heard the words of his patriot father, and felt a

Huguenot spirit burning within his own bosom. Another crash, sounding nearer than the previous one, shook the house-walls, and was multiplied by a hundred echoes through the streets of Charleston. All remained silent but the bridegroom, who lifted his arm, and, as if replying to his sire's last remark, exclaimed :

"That is the first gun from Sullivan's Island—the defiant answer of Liberty to the insulting mandate of her foe!"

At this moment a quick tread was heard beyond a circle of ebony faces and white teeth which had crowded the open doors of the saloon. The sable janitors made way for the passage of a figure that seemed greatly out of place in that scene of love and peacefulness; for it was that of an armed man, whose iron-shod boots clattered harshly on the threshold, while his heavy saber rattled as he advanced further. He paused in front of the bride and bridegroom, and taking no notice of clergyman, hosts, or wondering guests, drew out a letter from his gauntlet, and, making a military salute, presented the missive to Ernest Riviere, who hastily tore it open.

"'Tis from—" Old John Riviere pronounced these two words, and remained breathless, awaiting his son's perusal of the paper.

"From Colonel Moultrie," responded the bridegroom, in a lower voice; "I am summoned to the fort!"

Louise, gazing up bewildered, with cheeks grown pallid and lips parted in terror, felt her strength suddenly deserting her, and with a faint moan, sunk upon her husband's heart. Supporting her with one arm, the young man dismissed the ill-omened messenger by a motion of the hand. "Say to Colonel Moultrie I will attend," he said, in a firm voice.

"At once, Captain!" responded the soldier, with another military salute.

"At once!" repeated the bridegroom, clasping his insensible wife to his throbbing heart, while a dozen sympathizing women crowded near to assist her.

And now, pealing from church-towers, was heard the sound of alarm-bells. Then followed quick beats of drums, and the note of a single trumpet; presently, the clatter of horse-hoofs in the streets.

Ernest Riviere heard three calls of the trumpet, ere his bride's eyes opened under his misty gaze. The last peal seemed to rouse her from stupor. She flung her arms around the neck of him she held dearest upon earth, and sobbed for a moment with agonized emotion. Then, controlling her grief, and fixing a glance, lit with high enthusiasm, upon the troubled face of her husband, she murmured, "Go—Ernest—beloved! your country calls you!" and fell back into her uncle's outstretched arms.

Ernest pressed one kiss on his wife's lips, as another trumpet call sounded from a distance. The next moment he was gone. Those who listened heard the clatter of a horse's hoofs beneath the balcony, and then receding into the distance Robert Atnee and his friend

Xancey looked out into the still starlight, and the former whispered,
"He rides to his death."

"I think so," answered the other, "if Moultrie be fool enough to defend Sullivan's Island."

CHAPTER II.

THE DEFENDERS OF CHARLESTON.

The names of those whose swords have won,
Redeemed the green sod where they lie,
Transmitted still from sire to son,
From heart to heart, can never die!—G. HILL.

HOURS before the bridal and separation of Ernest Riviere and his cousin Louise, a score of anxious-featured men were assembled on a point of land between the town of Charleston and a stretch of marsh and sandy beach terminating at an insulated projection below, called Sullivan's Island. From the slight elevation which this party occupied, a view could be obtained of the wide sweep of channel that extended to the harbor bar, where two confluent rivers formed the roadstead of Charleston.

Sullivan's Island, comprising about three miles of sandy soil, overrun with palmetto thickets and dense growths of myrtle and yellow jasmin, constituted a natural barrier against the ocean at the opening of Charleston Bay. Lying at the mouth of an estuary into which the two rivers, Ashley and Cooper, mingle their tides, this island commands on one side the whole channel entrance, and on the other is separated from the mainland by a long, narrow strip of shoal and marshy water. On its seaward extremity, at the time of our story's opening, a rough fortification of spiked palmettos and other hastily-collected materials was in process of erection by numbers of patriotic volunteers; boats were plying between the island and shores above, conveying soldiers and supplies; and every effort was apparent on the part of Charleston's defenders to make ready for a vigorous resistance to the approaching British fleet.

The foremost figure of the group to which allusion has been made as gathered on the main shore above Sullivan's Island, was a man of at least forty years of age, who stood upon the edge of the bank, watchful of the coming and going of a line of flat-boats and light barges engaged in the transportation of military munitions. His features wore a bluff, good-humored expression, and an air of soldierly promptitude marked his mien and figure. His hair, thick and long, fell back from an expansive forehead, in a mass upon his shoulders.

Firm lip-muscles and fixed eye evinced a determined spirit and self-reliant character, while a *nonchalance* that appeared natural relieved his manner of all assumption of sternness. This marked individual was Colonel William Moultrie, afterward a Major-General in the patriot service, and immortal in history as the heroic defender of the fortified position which to this day bears his name.

A few paces behind Moultrie stood a man about the Colonel's age, but in physical appearance quite unlike that robust personage. He was low in stature, spare of limb, and sallow in complexion, but his frame had evidently been hardened by endurance and exercise. His eyes were quick and piercing, his forehead marked by lines of thoughtful experience. This man was Francis Marion, a ranger Captain during the Indian wars, and a Major in Colonel Moultrie's regiment.

The moon moved placidly amid her host of starry attendants, casting floods of silver upon the river-banks and placid waters between them. Charleston reposed in great beauty, above all bustle of transportation and warlike preparation. Detached mansions, white-walled and picturesque, contrasted pleasantly with the green darkness of surrounding groves and gardens. A palmetto wilderness filled the background, like a frame inclosing some pictured landscape.

Far down, beyond the fortified island, the British fleet could be descried, it having just succeeded in effecting an entrance over the sandy bars that intersected the channel, between the fortified island and another insulation immediately opposite. The passage on which the hostile ships had entered was narrow and shallow at low tide, and, moreover, ran closely parallel with a hard, sandy beach, that marked the line of Sullivan's Island. On this sandy beach the rampart of palmetto logs, called a fort, seemed hardly yet in condition to sustain a single broadside from the British squadron.

Such was the position of Charleston, and the danger menacing her brave defenders, on the evening of June 27th, 1776. The fleet gathered at her harbor's mouth numbered more than fifty sail, comprising vessels of war, transports, and attendant craft. Two fifty-gun ships and four frigates anchored in front of the palmetto fort, and several thousand regular soldiers were landed from transports upon the long island that lay toward the ocean opposite that called Sullivan's. At daybreak a combined attack by land-forces in boats, and cannonading from the ships, was expected by the Americans, and they made ready, in their humble way, to withstand it.

Then it was that a summons from the British Admiral, launched from a cannon's mouth, was answered by that lowly battery which dared to dispute his advance. Scarcely had the echoes of those opening voices of conflict died in the far-away forests, when the quick ears of Marion and Moultrie caught the tramp of horses sounding at some distance, approaching from the town. They both turned toward General Gadsden, who nodded significantly, remarking:

"It is Lee!"

"Ay, 'tis Lee," said Marion. "He has heard the lion's roar, and the watch-dog's bark in answer."

Moultrie smiled and said:

"The dog will bite as well as bark, Francis, let the General doubt as he may."

He spoke this in allusion to an opinion that General Lee was believed to entertain, to the effect that no stand could be made against an assault of British war-ships.

Several new figures now collected about the principal persons. Major Marion was a man of fine proportions and courageous presence, who leaned upon his rifle, looking downward to the palmetto fort. He wore the frock and leggings of a ranger, and his manly features were shaded by a tasseled fraying cap. Beside him stood a square built negro lad, about fifteen years old, with an intelligent countenance, who attentively surveyed the white sailed vessels that crowded the harbor's mouth.

"I is certain, sir, Massa Jasper," remarked the Black Boy, addressing the ranger, "de se ships is gettan' in a trap dat dey won't get out of, de Lord willin'."

The soldier turned his eyes from the fort to the fleet, but made no reply to his sable companion.

"Look dar," persisted the negro, rubbing his hands; "dem beats is bein' run' Britishers on de Long Hole; and the Long Hole is right under de Sullivan guns. Look dar, Massa Jasper! Jes' you see, Massa Jasper!"

"I see," responded the soldier. "The British troops are disembarking on your island, or 'Long Hole,' as you call it. But you forget, Caesar, the ships are between them and their fort."

"No matter for dat," cried the Black, shaking his woolly head. "Dea ships look mighty grand, but Massa Colonel Moultrie, he poke fire into 'em, sartain sure, sar."

"But, Caesar," said the ranger, "don't you know that the ships carry heavy metal, and that we can't keep them from landing by shooting hard behind our palmetto logs?"

"Of course, ob coarse, sar, I knows dat," cried Caesar. "But niller shall de heavy metal, Massa Jasper. Colonel Moultrie gib 'em hot shot, sartain sure, sar."

"Pah, pah, Caesar," interposed Marion. "The enemy's a stinkin' low-down lot that is sensible neither to reason."

So it passed on, the ranger, and Caesar, his companion, talked up their respective topics until the close of day. Both were a little fatigued, when at length, when the command of Colonel Moultrie had been given up, they sat down to their own

"What!" he cried, casting a searching look upon the fellow who had uttered the disparaging remark. "You think they will knock our ramparts to pieces? Well, sir, we shall be behind the ruins, and prevent a landing by our bodies."

Marien's eyes glistened, and his sallow cheeks flushed, as this Spartan declaration fell from his senior officer's lips. Jasper lifted his rifle, and brought the stock hard down upon the sward, with a ringing emphasis. Cesar, the negro, who was Moultrie's own servant, vented his satisfaction in a characteristic half-yell:

" Ha-yah ! " he cried, " dat's de way--dat's de way we serve 'em out--for sartain."

The man tous rebaked averted his scarred face, and turned away, just as a roar beat of hoofs upon the bank announced the arrival of General Lee, who, leaping from his horse, grasped the outstretched hand of Colonel Moultrie.

" Colonel Moultrie, that fort can never be successfully defended," were the first words of General Lee, after he had shaken hands. " You will be assailed at daybreak by the entire British fleet, and have nothing to oppose but a pile of palmetto-logs."

" Moultrie's eyes flashed. " You forget, General," he cried, " my men will be behind those logs."

" Still, I counsel the immediate abandonment of yon ler island de fence," rejoined Lee. " Recollect, sir, we have to deal with fresh and veteran troops--backed by the cannon of a well-manned squadron."

" But you would not counsel retreat, General ? " interposed Gadsden.

" No, sir ! " cried the impetuous congress officer. " It is my purpose to oppose their entry to the city with all the forces at my command, and to fight, sir, while a man remains at my side; but I hold it madness to attempt the defense of yon ler fort."

" I act under orders from Governor Rutledge," said Moultrie, quietly, " and these orders are to prevent the enemy from passing Sullivan's Island."

" Very well, sir ! " said Lee, in a chafel tone, and turning away. " I dispute not Governor Rutledge's authority, though it contradicts with my judgment. I shall prepare, Colonel Moultrie, to cover your retreat."

Moultrie inclined his head, with unruffled composure of countenance, and then advanced to meet a troop of horse that approached him at a gallop. Among the foremost riders the chief recognizable was Captain Pinckney, destined to become like himself a Major-General of the Continental army, with Ernest Riviere and so many other youthful volunteers. Riviere had exchanged his walking-cut for a military frock, the uniform of Moultrie's command, but still wore his white epauletttes and embroidered waistcoat. A broad-sabre was fixed beneath his blazosh, that had been decorated with a border traced by George Washington, and inscribed with the motto, " Love and our country."

In a brief space all who were destined for Sullivan's Island took their places in flat-boats, bidding adieu to comrades who remained at Fort Johnson and the camp of General Lee.

"When you are forced to give way, Colonel, I shall hasten to protect you," were the last words of that General, in acknowledging Moultrie's parting salute.

"Thank you, sir—if we need assistance," was Moultrie's rejoinder, in embarking, with Marion, Pinckney, and Riviere, in the last boat which left the bank.

General Lee rode away at the head of his staff, and none remained at the landing, save a few straggling citizens, and servants in charge of the horses.

CHAPTER III.

THE ROGUES' INTERVIEW.

If there no chill upon the warm, fresh current of thy heart?
Do not thy red lips blanch with fear, or pulse convulsive start?

E. W. FISH.

Among those who watched the embarkation of soldiers for the fortified island, the reader will recollect that individual who had intruded his scurvy face and unwelcome opinion upon the colloquy of Sergeant Jasper and the negro Caesar, and had received a signal rebuke from Colonel Moultrie himself. This ill-featured man lingered by the river-side for some moments after the last bateau departed from the upper beach.

He was apparently of middle age, strong-limbed, and of muscular development in chest and throat, and had, without doubt, undergone years of exposure and danger. His complexion was of that bronzed hue which results from constant contact with elemental changes. Boots and breeches clothed his nether limbs, and a slouched mariner's hat and jacket of frieze concealed his upper proportions.

After satisfying what might or might not have been a motiveless curiosity, this man turned from the beach, and walked slowly toward the town—many quivering lips and tearful eyes being averted from his sympathizing gaze, as he passed groups of citizens on the shore. Reaching the streets inhabited by the seafaring population, he paused, near the river's bank, at the last of a number of low, weather-beaten huts, which straggled along the water front. These tenements appeared lonesome, for the embarkation of troops a point below had attracted the residents of this squalid neighborhood in common with denizens of more refined populous. Some few disconsolate-looking females were creeping homeward, after parting from husbands or sons at the lower beach, but the general aspect of the locality was gloomy and deserted.

Mac Low Blaké opened the door of his hotel, that abutted on a

point of land sheltered by a high wooded bank, round which the river swept in an abrupt curve; so that, in fact, the dwelling occupied a small promontory jutting into the stream. Entering, the man stood in a single room which was far from being so like a fortress as the forbidding exterior might have indicated. Its single window was, it is true, half obscured by articles of rugged clothing fastened in broken panes; its rafters were black with smoke, and drenched by rain that had penetrated the ruinous roof. But there was, nevertheless, an air of rude comfort, joined with neatness, that could hardly have been looked for in the abode of the like Matthew Burke. Over the rough flooring was spread a fragment of carpet, unpatterned in pattern, and nearly threadbare, but of a costly fabric. Near the door was a ship's locker, entire, with mahogany fittings, carved very carefully, and bearing tarnished patches of gilding; and in a corner of the apartment was another nautical relic sufficiently curious.

This was a merchant-ship's caboose, once a fixture of some East-Indianman, as was evident from the royal crown and "Company's" arms, which yet appeared in faded colors on its mouldings. It now served the purpose of a bedstead, its front being draped with a double-corded crimson cloth, looped over a bar of gilt wood. Between the curtain folds, appeared a small bed, gayly adorned with bunting.

The remaining furniture of the apartment was meagre enough. A ship's cooking-stove, with a rusty pipe, some stools and a deal table, with a coarse canvass hammock, swinging from the rafters, composed its details. The caboose was the only object calculated to arrest a visitor's glance.

Silently closing the door of the hut behind him, the scared man moved on tiptoe across the floor, and pausing before the caboose, drew aside its hangings, disclosing an occupant of the small couch—a female child, beautiful as a cherub, and wrapped in profound sleep. As he did so, a remarkable change came over the man's countenance. The sneer left his lip, the scowl vanished from his dark brow, and he seemed to hush his breathing as he bent over the slumberer. Under the light of a swinging lamp which hung from the ceiling there appeared a moist light in his eyes, as if a tear struggled up from their hard corners. Stedly gazing, and then softly dropping the curtain, he was turning away from the bed, when a thin pale hand parted the drapery, and again discovered the young child.

In the faint glow of a solitary lamp, the contrast between the two occupants of that hut was an extreme one. The man's massiveness, with his singezy hair bristled on his broad shoulders, appeared almost gigantic; while the child, delicately moulded and of scarcely five summers, possessed that unearthly loveliness which conveys an inimitable impression that it has no affinity with mortal things. Over her forehead, clear as light itself, a cluster of golden rings shone in list and east, and clung around her pure white neck. It was a wonder of wonders how so gentle a child could be kin to the uncouth figure in whom she bewailed out her baby hands.

The man stooped to kiss the lips upturned to his own, and laid his hand tenderly as he might on her silken hair. The child raised her eyes, of a soft, dark, hazel hue, and fixed them lovingly on his face, but her lips murmured no greeting.

For this beautiful child was a Mute!

The illumination of her innocent soul radiated from forehead and eyes, but her affections were voiceless.

Nevertheless, there was strange eloquence in the dumb twining of the little arms about that fierce man's neck, and in the close pressure that he imprinted on her lips, as if he were stamping with a kiss the sole treasure of his existence.

And in the smoothing of her pillow, as the child fell back on her curious couch; and in the look with which he regarded her sweet face, as she lapsed once more to quiet slumber; there was more revealed of the man's heart, than Matthew Blake would have let the world see.

But, dashing his hand across his eyes, they became hard again, and he closed the caboose curtain, as if to shut himself away from another life, and be himself once more.

Matthew Blake took from a shelf an iron candlestick, with a bit of candle in the socket, which he lit at the penitent lamp. Stooping, then, he doubled back one corner of the loose carpeting which covered the floor of his hut, and proceeded to lift a portion of the plank flooring. This effected, a narrow passage presented itself, into which he was about to descend, when a low knock at the hovel-door caused him to start hastily back, restore the planking, and adjust the carpet in its former place.

Muttering discontentedly, as he replaced his candlestick and unbolted the hovel-door, the scarred man demanded gruffly who wanted him outside, and was answered by a low voice, and the hasty entrance of a visitor, muffled in a cloak.

"Hush, she sleeps, wake her not," muttered the host. "What errand now, Master Atnee?"

"Business, Matt," responded the other, throwing back his mantle collar, and disclosing a face both younger and handsomer than that of the scarred man.

"If it be your business, we'll talk about it elsewhere," muttered the latter, with a motion of his head toward the caboose. "Your secrets are not such as bring good dreams to sleepers."

"Hi! ha! Matt," laughed the visitor, "do you fear that deaf and dumb baby will overhear us?"

"Whatever I fear, I'll go elsewhere to talk of your business, Master Atnee," returned the man, doggily; to which the visitor rejoined: "Very well, Matt, as you will;" and turned at once to the hovel-threshold.

Licking the crazy front door of his hovel, the scarred man then followed his conductor in silence through the silent streets, under the canopy of trees and house-walls, till they approached that quartier

of Charleston in which were situated many ancient mansions, built by early settlers of the colony. Turning from the main road toward one of these, the two wound their way through an avenue of shrubbery, till they gained a rear building; and the younger pedestrian quickly led the way to a door which admitted them into a large apartment.

"Here we can be both at home, without scruples on the score of innocence," remarked the young man, in a sneering tone, as he proceeded to divest himself of hat and mantle, discovering thereby the figure of a man about thirty years of age, with handsome though slightly features, and an air of high breeding. Clad in a costly coat, finely ruffled, he seemed to have just left some gay assembly. His hair was powdered and curled, and fragments of a white rose clung to one of the embroidered button-holes of his silken vest; while flushed cheeks and somewhat glassy eyes betrayed some recent indulgence in wine.

"I'm dry as a redskin, Master Atnee," was the response of Matt Bako to the young gentleman's remark, on entering; whereupon the latter pointed to a case of liquors which stood on a table near by. The guest at once seated himself, and proceeded to inspect the square bottles, and to pour from the contents of one of them, which revealed the pungent odor of Jamaica spirits to his well-pleased olfactory. The host, meantime, threw himself in another arm-chair, and appeared to await impatiently the deliberate motions of his thirsty guest.

The apartment wherein the two were met, was a small chamber, apparently a detached building from the mansion to which it appertained. In fact, it formed a connection between the dwelling-house and a stock of out-houses, containing stables and other offices belonging to the owner of the place. Its single window was barred and closely curtained, but the arched ceiling was pierced by orifices communicating with the outer air, and sufficiently ventilating the interior, which had otherwise been too confined. Little furniture was noticeable, beyond table and chairs, though a variety of weapons, implements of hunting, and articles of clothing hung about the walls. A double-barreled gun crossed a couple of rifles, just above the fireplace, and that aperture itself was filled with sabres, broadswords, a game bag and several knapsacks. On one extremity of the table stood an ebony writing-desk, and the remainder of its surface, saveing that portion containing drinking vessels, was piled with a heterogeneous collection of military and naval uniforms, hunting-gear, waggoners' frocks and the like, while a complete array of warlike, comprising head-gear, wampum, fathoms and maces, presented an cutut suitable for any copper-colored Apollo. Interposed with these things, where maps, drafts and plans of roads or military works, together with pistols, daggers and other offensive armor—a reckless confusion characterizing all, so that they resembled truly

the paraphernalia of some vagrant Thespian's impromptu dressing-room.

Taking no notice, however, of the disorder around him, the scurried man leisurely filled his glass with rum, and swallowed the fiery beverage at a draught. Then, passing the flask and glass toward his host, he said, with a snick of his lips: "That was for thirst! I'll drink presently to your health, Master Atree."

"Drink, in the devil's name," responded the other, curtly; and then he could enough to give me your attention."

"In the devil's name I'll do nothing, Master Robert Atree," returned the other. "But in the name, and for the sake of this good Janie you, that I now drink your health in, I'll listen to any thing you have to say." So saying, the scurried man refilled his glass and raised it to his lips.

"Stop, Matthew," interposed the host, "you shall drink no more till you and I have a few words together. Nay," he added, observing the other's forehead contracting suddenly, "there'll be time to discourse by and-by, and I'll join you in a dozen glasses, Matt. But at the present moment, put down that liquor and listen to me."

The young man spoke in the tone of one accustomed to exact obedience, and the scurried individual responded by setting down his untouched second glass.

"Well, Master Robert—what would you?" he asked, gruffly.

"Listen, Matt; you know that Moultrie and the rest have gone to their mul-castle?"

"I saw the list of their flat-boat squalron, and doubtless the last of the popinjays themselves."

"And, my cousin was among the volunteers. You know that, Matt?"

"The fool, Riviere, who leaves his bride on her wedding night, to lend his body as a merlon for a log-fort. Ay, Master Atree, I saw your patriotic dance of a cousin in the boat with his Colonel and the ranger Marion."

Master Robert Atree leaned back in his arm-chair, and shading his face with one white hand, appeared to regard his companion through the palm-fingers. The guest returned this scrutiny by a sidelong glance, which perused the young man's face. The features of Robert Atree were regular, and might perhaps be termed classic. His forehead was clear and high. His skin transparent fair, with blue veins distinctly traceable. His eyes were blue, his lips full, and curved usually with a haughty expression, which, with firmly-set nostrils, imparted a disdainful air to his whole countenance. He had thick fingers, sickly and soft, full like gold about his shoulders, and covering the purple and contours which with fashion had built up his cheek. Altogether, the person of Atree was one which women might look upon with interest, if not with love.

"You were present at your cousin's wedding, I doubt, Master At-

nee," remarked the young man. "I saw a crowd of gallants and ladies through the hall casements, as I passed down to the beach."

"I was there," replied Atnee; "and 'tis of this I must talk to you. The accursed marriage is over, and Riviere calls the girl his wife."

"'Tis a pity she preferred not a loyal king's man," said the guest. "This rebel Riviere must lose his head ere long, though he survives to-morrow's work, which I venture to say will be of the hottest. Now, had the damsel chosen her other cousin—yourself, Master Atnee, who have sense enough to serve the strongest side—why, she had done a wise act, and—"

"Peace; Matthew Blake," exclaimed Atnee, with a gesture of impatience. "I asked not your opinion as to my cousin's choice. Suffice it, she is the wife of Ernest Riviere, and as such, Matt, do you hear me? I hate her, as I once loved her. Come, drink, and then listen."

The young man hurriedly filled his glass, and his companion, well pleased, grasped his own unfinished goblet. The two vessels clinked together, and Atnee drank and replaced his own upon the table. The scarred man sipped slowly, and remarked: "I am ready to hear what you have to say, Master Atnee."

"You are sure, Matt, that Riviere has gone to Sullivan's Island?"

"If a man's eyes can make sure, I saw him embark. He is long since there, with his fellow-volunteers, who will have a fine game of shuttle at day-break, with Sir Peter's bomb-ketches."

"Matthew Blake," said the host, slowly, "Riviere must never come back from Sullivan's Island."

"That is to say, alive," suggested the man, with a keen glance at his companion.

"You are right, Matt. He must never come back alive, to claim his bride and fortune," cried the other, quickly.

"His bride and fortune, eh, Master Atnee?"

"I said so, Matt, and you shall hear all, that you may learn your own interest, as well as mine; yesterday, could I have wished my cousin, Louise Arnoult, this dance, Riviere, might have gone his way, and no bad blood would have been between us. To-night, and henceforth, he is my foe, and stands between me and my right. He must die."

"And you marry his widow; is it so, Master Atnee?"

"Many!" exclaimed the young man, bitterly. "Nay, Matt Blake, 'tis my inheritance that I merit such a wife, though a half-craving cousin die in my path to it. Know you what I say my cousin Arnoult belongs to her rebel lover?"

"Deafness, her father, your uncle, lost her well I suppose, Master Robert."

"He left her wealth which should have fallen to me," answered Atnee; "wealth that my mother, his own sister, had yielded to him,

when she espoused my father. It constituted the foundation of a large fortune, which he afterward amassed by traffic. Yet his will allowed the chit, Louise, to inherit all, provided she married her cousin Ernest, the son of old John Riviere."

"Your cousin outgeneraled you and gained the heiress," said Matthew Blake, with a laugh.

"Hear me out, Blake," said the host, impatiently. "There was a contingency provided for, a contingency which may occur." He paused, fixing his pale blue eyes upon Blake's countenance. "In case the married cousins die without children, then the property reverts to our branch of the family, through Robert Atnee, its surviving representative."

"Ah," cried the other, quickly. "I perceive your meaning, Master Atnee. And this contingency—"

"I intend to insure, through your assistance, Matt," cried the young man, a fiery gleam lighting up his calm blue eyes.

There was a silence for a few moments between the two men. Each watched the other's face with covert glances, though both were apparently absorbed in thought. The scarred man was the first to ask, in a muttered tone :

"What would you do, Master Atnee?"

"To-morrow will be a bloody day on yon ler island," responded the other, significantly. "Many will fall behind those mud-ramparts that they call a fort."

"'Tis very likely," said Blake.

"But 'tis possible Riviere may escape; while a hundred fall around him; is it not so, Matt?"

"That's the chance of war, Master Atnee."

"You must prevent such a chance."

"How am I to prevent it, Master Atnee?"

"Do you pretend not to understand me? Riviere must die upon Sullivan's Island. A quick eye and ready hand can find many opportunities in the heat of action."

"It might be done," said the scarred man, peuring out another glass of the potent Jamaica. "And, moreover, the man who did the deed might not live to tell the tale."

"You have risked before now, far less than you will earn for this service in a friend's behalf, Matt Blake. Come to me to-morrow night with assurance that Riviere is out of my way, and as an earnest of the future, you shall have a thousand pounds."

The amount of this large sum of money caused Blake's eyes to glint, and he pressed his hand upon his chin, in deep reflection.

"This is a hard task, Master Atnee; and your cousin is a rebel, who fights with a Latin about his name. What if he should not die? When the king regains the province, your cousin's land is in full forfeiture, and your interest with the royal commissioners—?"

"I have thought of that, Blake. It may be true, as you say, that lands of rebels will become forfeit; but how know I that some in

triguer shall not bid higher than myself for them? Besides, the king is not yet in possession, and the rebels are. You forget, that now I pass for as staunch a patriot as any rebel of them all. No, no, Matt. I trust no hazard; I play with loaded dice."

The scurvy man regarded his companion with a mixed expression of admiration and suspicion upon his dark countenance. " You are willing to pay a high price to insure the contingency of which you spoke, and—I have you considered that the lady, your fair cousin, may be inclined to accept you as a second lord, rather than lose a godly fortune?"

There was a perceptible sneer in Blake's tone, which his employer did not relish. " What is that to you, Matt?" he demanded, querulously. " I asked not your counsel or aid regarding her."

" Oh, I forgot myself," returned Matthew Blake, with a bitter laugh. " You are the gentleman, I am the scoundrel. 'Tis you who plan; I am but the tool to execute."

" Well, well; say no more, Matt," cried the young man. " We know one another, and have no need to quarrel. The foul Rister stands between me and fortune. You have served me more than one good turn already, Matthew—"

" For which you have paid me," interrupted the scurvy man.

" Certainly, Matt; and when this business is accomplished, your fortune, as well as mine, may be made. Come, Matthew Blake, you know the thing can be done securely."

Blake mused a moment.

" A man might be pistoled in the smoke of a cannon," he said, slowly.

" The very plan, Matt, the very plan," repeated his employer, with a quivering voice. " To-morrow, during the fight, in the dense smoke of a gun. The plan is a notable one."

Again Matthew Blake laid his hand upon his broad palm, and appeared to muse; then, looking up:

" 'Tis a risk, 'tis a risk," he said. " I can not do it, Master Atree."

" A risk; you have encountered risks ere this."

" Ay; but I care not to be all day under broadsides of a British fleet. The canon-balls will riddle yon' island; and as every bullet must have its target, who knows but Matthew Blake's—~~his~~—pill might be rammed hard down in the throat of Sir Peter's bulldogs?"

Robert Atree durst not look at his companion, which that individual met with a stolid stare.

" Are you going to show the white feather, Matt?" asked the Tory, in a husky voice.

" Running my neck in a noose, as a matter of business, is one thing," said the bravo. " I know what I'm about, and take my chances. But if I go to that mud-sorth, 'tis a dozen to one that I never come out of it."

"Tut, Matt--you are no coward, man."

"Coward or not, I've *that at home*, Master Atnee, which you can not give. So I'll wait for the next hang-dog job you have in store, and let some other go, I comrade earn the thousand pounds."

With these words, Mathew Blake rose from his seat, and stood with shoulder hat in hand, returning the fixed gaze of his host, who had also risen.

"You'll not undertake this, Blake? You fear—"

"No matter what I fear; I'll not go behind the logs of Sullivan's Island."

"And yet you still, Matt, how easy to discharge a pistol, while smoke rolled around?"

"What I said I said, Master Robert; but no log-ramparts and mud-bastions betwixt Matt Blake and British broadsides. Good night, Master Atnee."

"Stay! Villain that you are, Matt, there is some design in this refusal! You would betray me! You play a double game!"

"I risk not my life in that cursed fort, for any man's gold or promises," returned the bravo, evasively.

"Dog, you are treacherous! but you leave not this house till I have done with you!" cried the young Tory, rising angrily from the table; for the dogged refusal of the scarred man, who had long been an instrument in his hands, ready to perform the most desperate service, was quite unexpected. But Mathew Blake had already shot back the bolt that fastened the door by which he had entered.

"Good-night, Master Robert," he said. "You may finish the Jamaica at your leisure."

The scarred man then sprung forth into the darkness that encompassed the out-buildings.

CHAPTER IV.

ROBERT ATNEE'S SLAVES.

All that flesh doth cover
Are but slaves sold over
To the master, Time.—MILNE.

CONFOUNDED by the obstinacy of his confederate, and the latter's abrupt retreat, the Tory did not reign his presence of mind till Blake was safely away. He then repented his folly in allowing vexation to hurry him into anger, and, rebolting the closed door, remained in an attitude of reflection.

"Some motive is at the bottom of Matt's refusal of a thousand

pounds," he muttered. "'Tis not cowardice in him; and as for treachery what can he gain by betrayal of the king's cause on the very eve of our triumph? Nevertheless, I must secure him—I must secure him. Ha! I have it!"

Atnee resumed his seat, and appeared to ponder deeply. His curly locks struggled between his white fingers, and were lifted from his foreheel, fair as a woman's. But had an eye been near to mark the various shades which darkened his features, the transitions of expression, from that of suspicion or fear to hate and a great resolution, it would have seen how strong passions can run beneath the heartless beauty of outer seeming. Rising abruptly at length, and clinching his fist above his head, he exclaimed in a husky tone:

"Riviere must not escape! Matt Blake shall not desert me at this pinch! My proud cousin Louise shall never triumph in her minion's return!"

Uttering these words, the Tory began to divest himself hastily of his fashionable attire, exchanging velvet garments for a complete suit of the regimental uniform then used by the provincial militia in the Carolinas, and fixing on his lapels a knot of blue ribbons, worn by Whigs to distinguish their sentiments on occasions of public demonstration. Placing a three-cornered hat upon his head, and buckling a sword-belt around him, he left the room by another door, opposite the one through which his late visitor had been admitted, and emerged into an obscure passage, which he followed till obstructed by another door. This he opened, with a key that he carried, and entered upon a wide hall, terminating in a spiral staircase. Ascending this to the floor above, the Tory presently reached another staircase which led to a spacious gallery, furnished sumptuously in the style of that period. Massive chairs of black walnut, mines heavy with gilded carvings, and paintings in oval frames, were the objects calculated to strike a stranger's attention on entering; and the pictures—principally of cavaliers and ladies—bore a general likeness to one another to confirm the observer that they were ancestral representatives of some ancient colonial family. The windows were open, but the cool night-air was permitted to enter through the network curtains wrought in various shades and patterns. Waxen candles burnt upon an antique table near one of the windows; and seated near were two females, who rose as Robert Atnee abruptly strode into the apartment.

Robert Atnee was an orphan like his cousin, Louise Arnott, and in point of worldly possessions had, a few years previous, espoused the heiress of his uncle's wealth. But ten years of dissipation, during long sojournings in European capitals, had been sufficient to squander the greater portion of his own inheritance; so that, at thirty, the spendthrift found himself narrowed in income to an es-

decaying degree. The yearly rents accruing to entailed property in the province, though not of large amount, might still have been ample to meet the wants of a less extravagant liver. But from his early youth, and even before the demise of an indulgent mother, his last surviving parent, Robert Atree had been his own master, and, as a consequence, badly served. At the present time, though not immediately involved, he reflected ruefully upon that prospect in the future; and, being both artful and unprincipled, neglected no opportunity that offered regeneration to his wretchedly shattered fortunes.

Such was Robert Atree at the time he was introduced to the reader. And 'tis, but calculating, he had taken no prominent part among those who contended for king or colonies in the struggle now going on in his native province. He concealed his predilections, which were all on the mother country's side, and shrewdly temporized with the prevailing Whig spirit, by mingling with patriots, and calculating, in some measure, to the funds raised for provincial defense. At the same time, looking not that British force must soon crush the rebellion, he maintained a secret correspondence with royal emissaries, both in Canada and Virginia, and devoted himself covertly to the enemy's service, by keeping watch upon and disclosing the periodic comings of unsuspecting Whigs.

Such men as Robert Atree were the most dangerous foes that lovers of liberty were called upon to contend against. They inspired confidence which they continually betrayed. Many, indeed, of these secret traitors pursued their machinations throughout the entire war, and, after its termination, contrived to conceal the fact of their ever having been other than true, self-sacrificing patriots.

Ungenerous, however, as Atree was in the means to which he resorted—as has been seen by his proposition to Matthew Blake—still his ulterior schemes were subordinate to powerful ambition. He looked forward to opportunities for rendering himself of no small importance as a royal agent in repressing colonial sedition, and sought in his traitorous correspondence, not only to magnify his devotion to British interests, but to enlarge upon the risks which he incurred should his adherence to King George be discovered by the Whigs. In this way he desired not that he could create powerful regard among those whom he appeared to serve disinterestedly; and even regard he resolved should be turned to his ultimate personal advancement. We will now pass from the Tory's character and revert to his presence, and to the females who rose to greet his entrance in the pictured gallery.

The elder of the two women was a negress; the younger of African extraction, but with few characteristics of the race, and both were slaves belonging to Robert Atree's household. The negress had been a house-servant in days long anterior to her present master's birth, and had attended him during infancy and earliest childhood. The girl was her grandchild, now sixteen years of age, gracefully formed, and with scarcely a negro trait save her complexion, which was

only a shade darker than that usually belonging to brunettes of a Southern clime. Large slumberous eyes, fringed with heavy lashes, small, finely-shaped mouth, and teeth like pearls, were features of attraction, in fact, which many pure-blooded dames might envy; and the brown sun-tint that flushed through her transparent skin, illuminating them all with a warm life that European veins could never quicken into such rich expression. The girl was clad in white, and wore no ornaments but a broad gold ring on her fore-finger.

When Atnee crossed the gallery threshold, his young slave sat with her gran'dame near the open easement, through which a light breeze arose from galleries beneath. She was busy embroidering a military sash; her head bent slightly, disclosing the turn of a polished neck. Rising to acknowledge the master's presence, her eyes remained downcast, but her shoulders, and all that was visible of her face, became suffused with crimson.

"Well, mother Gattan," said the young Tory, advancing to the table, and addressing the old woman, without notice of her grandchild, "I come to talk with you, good *ma bonne*, my good nurse."

The negress courtesied, wheeling forward a large arm-chair with officious attention, and remaining standing like her companion, till their master threw himself upon the cushions. This old woman was evidently of no inferior type of the African race. She did not possess the disagreeable lineaments, noticeable in Congolese or Guinea tribes. Her color, indeed, partook of that olive shade which marks the Mauritrian race; and doubtless she belonged to some branch of those numerous mixed families inhabiting the upper regions of Ethiopia, upon the border of Fezzen. In fact, it was a customary boast of Marguerite, or Gaston, as she was familiarly called, that her fathers had been princes, and made war against white men. Whatever her origin, it was known that she had been brought to America, in youth, and that she retained memories of superstitious teachings, and still practiced ceremonials, that were obviously of Mohammedan association. She was accustomed to mutter her prayers at sunrise, looking eastward, and to cherish a belief in the efficiency of ablutions, which was certainly a virtue in her domestic position. But, there was likewise much in the old slave's character to back her claims to superior birthright; a haughtiness at times, and a spirit in her bright black eyes, which suited ill the station of a maid. Her figure, too, erect in age, as it had probably been stately in youth, would have furnished evidence of noble blood, if coupled with the Saxon rose or Celtic lily in cheek and brow.

"Shall Fillipa remain?" asked the old nurse, glancing at her grand-daughter, whose eyes were riveted upon her emerald.

"No—let her go," said Atnee, in response; and with a wave of her hand the grande dismissed the girl, who, with cast-down cast eyelashes, courtesied to her master, and glided noiselessly from the gallery.

"How old is Fillipa?" asked the master, with a careless glance

after her retreating figure. The negress pondered a moment, and then answered :

"Sixteen years, Master Robert."

No clipping of syllables, such as make up the usual *patois* of her class, was apparent in the old slave's speech, though her voice faltered somewhat in replying to her master.

"A tall old fir-mage," repeated Atnee. "I was asked to sell her, yester'day, Gattan." As he said this, the master noticed that the old woman's countenance fell visibly. "But," he continued, with a smile, as he wreathed his handsome mouth, "I refused a large sum—a very large sum of our Filippi."

The negro clutched her hands together, and pressed them to her breast. There was more significance in this mute manifestation of feeling than could have been conveyed by a thousand words. "Master—master!" it seemed to say, "you will not ask Gattan to part with her grandchild?"

"I don't forget, nurse Gattan, that you saved my life," resumed Atnee. "Twas you who cured for me when every one—even my own master—left from my bedside." The Tory alluded to a contagious fever that had nearly terminated his existence in childhood, and from which he had recovered only through the untiring devotion of his slave attendant. "So, ma bonne, I must ask your advice in this matter; though, in sooth, our little Filippi would bring a round sum—a very round sum, Gattan."

"Master Robert!" cried the negress, her eyes filling with tears, as she regarded the young man's countenance, so fair and apparently touch'd. A sob checked all further speech, whereupon Atnee lowered his voice to a whisper :

"Gattan," he said, "the cousins are well led! My mother's wealth, that should be mine, goes henceforth to smooth-faced Ernest Riviere."

"They are well led, Master Robert?" repeated the slave-nurse. "Ah! had your mother lived, Master Artoult would never have forgotten you."

"Twas my mother's fortune which enabled him to amass the wealth he left behind," said Atnee, bitterly. "What right had he to leave his sister's child a beggar!"

Gattan started. "Who's a beggar, Master Robert?" she asked, quickly.

"Who?" echoed the Tory, with a passionate start. "I, your master—the heir of rich old Marimba! Atnee—I sit here this night, a beggar, at least, at my prime of life." He paused and struck his hand, while Gattan regarded him with a look of amazement. "Ay! look at me, ma bonne," he continued, vehemently, casting back the curtains from his pale brow, with a hollow laugh. "You do not know how I have flung away hoards of gold, and scattered broad acres in dust. But I say to you now, that pleasure-seeking and

dice-rattling have played dacks and drakes with your old master's wealth, and his son's inheritance?"

Making this confession with reckless tone and manner, Robert Atnee threw himself back on the cushion, and watched the effect of his words on Gattan, who had listened with speechless anxiety, clasping her withered hands together. The negroess remained with fixed attention for some moments, as she lay there silent:

"Master Robert—fair Master Robert," she exclaimed, "is all lost? Master Marrelado's property gone—all gone?"

The accents of real affection in which those simple words were uttered, caused a smile to lit on the Terry's lips; and he replied, quickly:

"As far as that, Gattan, I hardly think we're quite destitute. We have Laurelwood and our townhouse left, *not to me*. I am not exactly a beggar, but, in very is e unfortunably scarce these times, or I shall never think of selling Filippa."

The old negroess rose, with her hands still clasped, and stretched them toward her master:

"Oh master! dear master!" she cried, in a husky voice. "If Filippa must be sold, Gattan will die."

Atnee regarded his slave for a moment with a stealthy glance, and then muttered impatiently: "Well, well, Gattan, never mind, she's not sold yet." He turned, and abruptly left the gallery.

The negroess remained as if in stupor, till the light pressure of her granddaughter's hand aroused her: "Quick, mother—I must follow Master Robert," whispered the quakoon, hurriedly. And drawing the old woman after her, the girl opened a narrow door, near the table, and disappeared into an inner apartment whence she presently emerged entirely metamorphosed.

Instead of the white dress she had worn, the quakoon had donned a masculine frock, and appeared to be a handsomer lad of twelve years. The flock was blue, and beneath she wore trowsers of coarse jean. Slippers and a skull-cap completed the ensemble of a suddenly boy. Thrusting a pistol in her coat bosom, she kissed the old woman, and turned to depart.

"Take care, Filippa, of the ring."

"Never fear, master," answered the quakoon, lifting her finger with the gold cartier to her lips. "A slave's best friend is in it, I assure you," she murmured, significantly, and then darted away.

When Gattan was alone again, she clasped her withered hands together, and laying them up and down. "Poor Filippa—poor Filippa," she groaned. "She loves, and she is a slave! God help her! The ring may fail to be her last friend, poor child."

CHAPTER V

A NIGHT OF ADVENTURE.

Oh! how will sin engender sin.—COLMAN.

The Esquire! Eliza emerged from Atree's house, traversed the star-bright avenue that skirted it, and hurried on, till at a turn of the highway, she caught a glimpse of her young master's figure at a distance. With a joyful exclamation, she quickened her steps.

The Tory pursued his way, unconscious that he was followed so closely, and in the space of half an hour reached the outpost of Lee's camp. Answering the challenge of a sentinel, he penetrated a pine of woods, where he was soon after joined by a man who wore a uniform of the patriot service.

"Punctual!" was Atree's brief salutation, to which the soldier replied, in an agitated voice:

"I'm running a heap o' danger, Captain."

"Ifish! no more than your betters do," rejoined Atree. "What have you learned now, sir?"

"That the General opposes Moultrie, and thinks he'll be defeated."

"I knew that, hours ago, Samuel Pappett. You are behind the age, my good fellow!"

"All I know," said the other, sullenly, "the General has just issued orders to our raw recruits to hold themselves ready to cover Moultrie's retreat."

"Pish!" cried Atree, impatiently. "What papers have you?"

"Here is a letter from General Washington that our General missed, and a map of the Floridas, with some plans about an expedition that I found in his orderly's pocket."

Atree snatched the documents from his emissary's hand, and thrust them into his bosom.

"I hope you'll not forget to mention me to Sir Henry when you meet him, sir; this business is dangerous, and—"

"No, no, sir. You shall be mentioned."

"Because you know, Captain, I'm risking my life."

"I know your tendencies, Samuel Pappett," returned Atree, "and your fidelity to the cause that pays best."

"That's hard, Captain—I'm a loyal king's man, and if I am found in the rebel camp by Sir Henry, you know—"

"I'll see to that, sir, and as I want your assistance outside, I'll obtain you a furlough to-night."

"Oh, thank you, Captain," cried the spy.

"Now, go to your quarters, Pappett; I have a visit to make to some officers."

Waving his hand abruptly, Robert Atnee passed on through the clump of woods, and the spy slunk off in another direction. Immediately afterward, another man clad like Pappett in the patriot uniform, crept from under some brushwood that afforded him concealment, and turned toward the sentinel's post.

"What luck, Tom Irvins?" asked the sentry, recognizing his fellow-soldier. "Did you discover anything?"

"That sneaking Pappett has given the other man's me papers, but they conversed too low to be overheard. I'm bound to have those documents, howsoever, before I sleep to-night."

"Will you give information to the Colonels?"

"And get snubbed for my pains?" quoth the soldier. "No, sir. I'll find the fox track before I am a dog. If Pappett's playin' possum in the camp, them papers'll tell the story, and them papers I'm gwine to have afore bed-time. If the papers turn out all right and patriotic, Tom Irvins is a jackanapes—Tom Irvins will be court-martialed as a meddler; but if they be all wrong, then Tom Irvins has started the right trail, precisely. Now I'm gwine down to the creek to play Injin."

"Lie in ambush, eh, Tom?"

"Precisely."

"Countersign, Tom."

"I've got it—all right, comrade," answered the continental, whispering the words; and then, passing the cup-st, he sauntered leisurely down the road, which, skirting a wooded bank, lay half in moonlight and half in shadow.

But he had not proceeded far, ere he was himself followed by another figure. It was that of the disguised queen, Lulu, who, having concealed herself near the sentry, had been a portion of his conversation with Tom Irvins, and, wretched for her master's safety, resolved to track the soldier on his path.

The creek, of which Irvins had spoken, spanned by a narrow bridge, crossed the wood about a quarter of a mile from the camp; and selecting a spot for his hiding-place near the bridge-head, the patriot soldier awaited the return of Atnee, while, crouching low at the edge of a palmetto thicket, the Try手 saw exulted the ambuscade.

An hour passed, and Robert Atnee appeared, followed by the spy Pappett. The two passed closely by the thicket where Lulu had hidden, and the next moment reached the creek. Presently a sharp cry broke the stillness of the night, and the figure of a man darted swiftly across the bridge. Lulu saw that it was the spy, and darting forward, beheld her master struggling with the soldier who had waylaid him. Both stood upon the same bridge, striving for the

mastery; but it was apparent that Atnee was no match for his antagonist. Filippa retelling them, heard her master's gasping voice:

"What do you want?" cried the Tory, whose neck was tightly compressed by the soldier's strong arms. "Would you murder me?"

"Submit quietly, or you may force me to do that," replied the man sternly; and with a sullen effort he threw Atnee upon his back.

"Let me go—I have money! my purse—my watch."

"You infernal Tory! do you take me for a footpad? No sir! you are my prisoner, and must go to the camp, with those papers that the rascal Pappett stole for you. I've a mind to cast you into the creek for that speech of yours, for I'm a whig, and not to be bribed, my good sir."

While uttering these words, Tom Irvin had placed his knee upon the prostrate man's breast, and was drawing a stout cord from his pocket, wherewith to pinion his prisoner's arms. At this juncture a steckly step upon the bridge caused him to turn his head, but the alarm was too late. Filippa's pistol, pressed against his breast, was the next moment discharged, and the patriot soldier toppled heavily from the log-bridge into the dark water below. Robert Atnee was saved, and sprang to his feet, while yet the reverberations of the pistol-shot were ringing in the woods. He caught one glimpse of a boyish figure darting down the road, and disappearing in the shadows; then, dashing the hair from his eyes, he reeled to the bridge-edge, and peered down into the creek. A struggling sound and choked groan arose therefrom, and presently all was still.

"He will tell no tales," muttered the Tory. "By the fiend! 'twas a narrow chance. Curse's light on that treacherous Pappett. 'Twas no shot of his that came so opportune."

Thus communing with himself, the Tory hastened on, apprehensive that the pistol-shot might have alarmed the neighboring outposts. Approaching the city streets, he overtook his late comrade Pappett, cowering by the roadside.

"Cowardly knave!" he exclaimed, "you deserted me."

"Forgive, Master Atnee," gasped the spy, who yet shook with fright. "I was not in stir of myself, for that devil of a ranger, Tom Irvin, has bagged you. I met, so that when—"

"A trace with your explanations now, sir," said Atnee, contemptuously. "Your devil of a ranger will trouble us no more. But if you are yet at your desertion like this, you lily-livered valet, I pray you that you'll be cold as he does. Now, sir, to the business we have to do, but I ware of showing the white feather again."

Atnee started forward; and Pappett trod mechanically in his footsteps, till they gained a curve of the river-street where stood that collection of hovels before described as the quarter where resided Matthew Blake. The hours had now advanced beyond midnight, and the city was wrapped in silence, though probably few eyes were closed this night in sleep. The Tory stopped before Blake's hut, and

beckoned to his companion to approach, and peer through the chinks of a broken shutter, that permitted a glipse of the interior, discovering the curtain'd caboose, fit by the swinging lamp.

"The child, is in that cot," whispered Atree. "You have but to effect an entrance and snatch her from under the curtain. Being deaf and dumb, she can neither hear nor give an alarm, as you carry her off."

"The shutter—is it fast?" responded the spy, applying his hand to the framework, which nearly yielded to his last pressure.

"Not—if the ruffian, as you say he is—it he shall return," faltered Pappett.

"Am I not here to apprise you?"

"But if he bring others—if he should come on us unawares," cried the spy, hesitatingly.

"Will you never have done with your cowardly fits, sir? The man will not trouble us, for I know his habits and that he still returns before day-break. Are you resolved to taunt me, sir?"

"I will do your will, Master Atree. I did not refuse," murmured the spy, as he noiselessly drew away the shutter-key from its rotten socket, and exposed the shattered window, stuffed with rags.

"Stay. Have you an axe-fit, man, that your teeth chatter thus? Stand back here—I will enter myself. But if your cowardly heart leads to another desertion like the last, I swear, Samuel Pappett, that your reward from Sir Harry, when he finds, shall be a hang-knot tied by the provost-marshall."

With this whispered threat, Atree thrust his thumb axemissile aside, and tearing out the rubbish from a broken pane, quickly succeeded in raising the narrow window sufficiently to chance his hand to reach the key that secured the louvered door. Bidding Pappett to keep watch outside, he then boldly entered the single apartment.

It presented the features already familiar to the reader; and Atree, who was no stranger there, glided at once to the close set to pursue his design of abducting the Bravo's child. But ere he laid his hand upon the curtain, a hurried glance about him caused the intruder to pause suddenly in his design. He discovered the carpet-straps rolled together in a heap, and a dark aperture gaping like a grave in the doorway beyond. Startled at the sight, he paused in alarm, irresolute, then recollecting his self-possession, however, and the want of a heavy flight of steps descended apparently to some vaulted crypte below. Peering into the opening, he caught a glipse of a figure passing through the darkness below, and said, "It is not like the Bravo's child; and I am surprised, who could it be?—and have, it is true, a mind to know." As he cast his thoughts, the boy consciousness desecrated the jeweled steps, his feet slipping on a bed of clay beneath, and entered a narrow excavation that proved to slope upward. Steadilying his footing, by stretching out his hands to the clammy sides of this passage, he crawled forward through a wicket gap, which opened upon a cavernous vault, damp and chilly. He

divined at once that this subterranean chamber was under the wooded bank which, as before said, intervened between Blake's hut and the river, that here curved abruptly.

But the Tory's interest became riveted the next moment by another discovery. He saw Matt Blake kneeling on the ground, apparently absorbed in the contemplation of a small, iron-bound oaken chest, which was open before him. The chest was full of gold coins, bracelets, and jewels, which, in the rays of a candle glimmering beside it, shone with dazzling splendor. Rich necklaces of diamonds and pearls, brooches, rings and pendants, watches, jewelers' trifles, and even wedges of solid gold, were mingled promiscuously in such profusion, that the squat, stout Atee, in surveying them, with his breath growing short with eager admiration. Matt Blake crept closer the whole like one of those fabled genies which are said to guard the buried treasures of earth; and as he handled the ornaments with gleaming tenacity, his hoarse voice syllabled monotonously his passing thoughts.

"Ha, ha!" muttered the man, "this is the stuff that rules both King and King's men. What would King George himself be without it, and where would be yon Congress troops, with no dollars to pay for their patriotism?" He snorted grimly as he held up a costly necklace in the candle's rays. "Ay, ay," he went on, "ye're blushing as if there was no blood on ye; and yet I saw ye once on a neck as white as Alice's."

Matt Blake's features contracted as the memory of some past crime smote him for a moment. Dropping the necklace, he held up a diamond ring, that sparkled like an eye in the darkness. "A delicate finger wore ye once," he said, "a proud lady kissed ye, and plead for her love-token, and vowed she'd never part with it. Sure enough she kept it till the breath left her fair body, and now it's Alice's—Alice's."

The Bravo's hard face softened, and his harsh voice trembled in pronouncing the name of that unconscious child whom he had left in the hot shelter. "'Twas for her," he muttered, with an oath, "and she shall never know how she comes by thean. 'Twas for her mother I took the Bloody dock, and raised my black flag to the mast-head, t' t' t. I lost her—lost the only one that ever cared for Matt Blake to a man. And now her child shall have all. Alice will remember Matt, when he's going to die. Poor dumb chick—poor dumb chick!"

He closed his hands and sat on side-by-side between the two, holding the jewel that he held. His face was turned to the enclosure where cowered the concealed Tory, but the intense pallor of the man's heavy frame shake with emotion. A sudden thought crossed the mind of Robert Atee; a thought of the ease with which a single blow or shot might secure the possession of that, the pirate's ill-gotten hoard; but the next instant a movement of Blake to close his oaken casket, caused the Tory to shrink back

into the narrow passage. He lingered, however, till he beheld the Bravo lock and double-lock the box, and thrust it far into a crevice of the wall, then with noiseless speed he retraced his steps to the hovel.

Pappett, the spy, obedient to his patron, had taken his post as sentinel outside, and being, as we have said, a coward of the first water, but cunning without to a remarkable degree, he ensconced himself in the bush-covered bank which joined the hut, in order at once to overlook the moonlit street and river bank, and to screen himself from any casual observation.

But he had scarcely secured his position among the thick boughs when he became aware of a phenomenon which caused the perspiration to ooze in large drops from his trembling body. This was a faint, greenish light, apparently emanating from the bank itself, a few feet from the spot where he had fixed himself. It was dim and flickering, but distinct enough to infuse Pappett with vague apprehensions. By degrees, however, observing no augmentation of the light, the spy grew venturesome, and ascertained that it proceeded from a small fissure in the bank, overhanging the water's edge—a fissure scarcely broader than his hand's width, but evidently connecting either with a hollow in the hillock or the interior of the hut which he was guarding. This discovery caused Pappett new alarm, and some minutes elapsed before he could muster courage to remove a tangled mass of undergrowth sufficiently to admit of his head being depressed toward the opening. The clammy earth, in contact with his forehead, sent a chill through the man's blood, but at this moment a dazzling spark, as of gold, awakened all his faculties. Curiosity and avarice were both stimulated, and Pappett began to scoop away the dirt, in order to widen the crevice. The light glimmered more steadily, and in a moment more, the eager spy was able to discern a cave below, in which the figure of a man apparel kneeling beside a box of glittering treasures. A dazzling array of jewels and many bearded zether flashed on Pappett's sight with a splendor that almost deprived him of his senses. His brain swam, and for a moment he lost the power of vision. Recovering instantly, he saw the man below in the act of closing the box, and passing it far into a recess of the cliff wall. Next instant, all was dark in the cave, and he heard his own name called from the hovel-door:

"Pappett—villain! where are you?"

The spy recognized Acton's voice, and emerged from his cover in time to see his master hasten from the hut, and dash along the street, bearing a burden on his shoulder in his hands.

CHAPTR VL

THE OUTLAW'S CHILD.

A rude, dark, stormy man was he,
His passions like his deeds were wild;
But yet he loved that stricken child.—D. ASKE.

"Alice! Alice! my chil! my chil!"

The utterance of these words sounded like a shriek in Matt Blake's mouth, as he discovered the loss of his child. Returning from the cave, unsuspecting of what had taken place during his absence, he had busied himself for some moments in replacing the plank and carpet of his flooring, and making ready for the night's rest in his solitary habitation. It was not till a half-hour, at least, had gone by, that he lifted the curtain of the calicoe, in order to kiss, as usual, his slumbering child. The derangement of the bed-clothes, the absence of his little one, struck the father, at first, with a blank amazement, which was speedily succeeded by horror and fury. He ran around the room like a wild man, paused at the spot where he had removed the plank, as if fearing the child might have fallen into the gap during his absence; then, sullenly dashing to the door, he discovered that, though once closed, as he had left it, the key-bolt had been shot back; and a single glance at the open window-shutter showed how the abductor had gained entrance.

Then it was that, with a cry more like the howl of a tigress robbed of her young, than of a human being, the bravo called on his child's name, and throwing himself on his knees beside the calicoe, layed on its pillow, clasping that intimate object, as he repeated: "Alice my chil! my child!"

It was indeed a powerful love that this bad man cherished for his little offspring; a love intertwined, as it were, with every fiber of his heart; the same species of affection that a wild animal entertains for its young, changing not the furious instincts of its kind, but only modifying their natural propensities. Matt Blake arose from his knees with a sullen scowl and gleaming eye, and opening an old chest, took from it a brace of pistols, which he set himself down to load. This done, he deposited them in a pocket of his rough coat, and with them concealed a broad-bladed knife sheathed with leather. Then, turning a listlessly look at the deserted calicoe, he crossed his threshold, locked the door mechanically, and strode gloomily through the silent streets, directing his course toward the house of Robert Atner. Passing to the rear of the Tory's mansion, he gained

the private door and knocked loudly. It was opened at once by Atnee, whose smooth smile greeted him as he entered in early silence.

"Well Matt, you look well," said the Tory, closing and bolting the door. "But you have come to renew good fellowship, I doubt not; so sit, and fill up a goblet."

Matt Blake did indeed step to the table and clutch a glass which he filled with the crimson spirit. But, instead of drinking, he dashed its contents to the floor.

"So may blood run between us," cried the Bravo, "till you give me back my child."

The Tory's handsome face flinched for a moment, as the eyes of Blake, burning like coals of fire, were fixed upon his own. But he calculated his course, and knew the man with whom he had to do. Therefore, he answered with a renewed smile, and said:

"Tut, tut, Matt; you were not went to spill good liquor thus—"

"I want no rum, Atnee; I want blood—your blood, and I'll have it."

Answering thus, the Bravo sprung upon the Tory, and grasped his neckcloth with a grip like iron, bearing him backward, till he reeled to the floor.

"Matt! Matt!" gasped the Tory, "won't you kill me?"

"My child! Alice! my child!" replied Blake in a terrible tone. "Robber and kidnapper, give me back my Alice."

He drew the broad-bladed knife from its scabbard, and held it over Atnee's breast, which was pressed by his knee.

"Ay, Master Atnee; as there is a hell for both of us, I will murder you if you give me not back my child."

"Matt Blake, are you mad. Release me," cried the Tory, making ineffectual struggles to rise, his neck compressed by the Bravo's gripe almost to strangulation.

"You have stolen my child, to get me in your power; to force me to work your will on Riviere. But I'll slay you like a dog, if you give her not back."

Blake hissed these words between his teeth, as he lifted the knife for a blow, and Robert Atnee, writhing under his burning eyes, almost gave himself up for lost. But the Tory's presence of mind did not desert him. Suddenly relaxing his hand, and letting his head sink heavily, he murmured:

"Kill me, Matt Blake, and never let me live again."

This speaking, he fell suddenly on the floor, as if made lifeless by further resistance. The impaling blow of his knife missed his heart, and Matt Blake appeared to hesitate. Atnee's eyes still unconquered him. Sapping her abject raiment, would that restore the child? He withdrew his hand from the young lad's throat.

"Get up, Master Atnee," he muttered, savagely, "and answer me like a man."

The Tory had calculated the effect of his stratagem, though it was in fact a forlorn hope. He arose with reeling brain, and seizing his

own untasted spirits, swallowed a few mouthfuls to moisten his dry throat. Blake watched him gloomily.

"Well, Matt," said the young man, as he adjusted his neck-cloth and wiped his forehead, "now that you are no longer frantic, perhaps we can understand one another. What has happened to you?"

"Do you ask, Robert Atnee?" demanded the father, quite crazy with suppressed fury, in observing the other's composure. And he snatched at his child: "Oh, you keep still."

"Matt Blake, I sympathize with you, and promise to aid you to the best of my ability in recovering your child, if you, in return, promise to keep your fingers off my throat, and—"

"Where is she? Atnee! devil—I know not what to call you—where is my Alice?"

"You have scratched my neck and torn my skin shockingly, Matt," returned the Tory. "Nevertheless, I bear no malice, and if you take care of my cousin, in the fort to-morrow, there'll be no harm come to your Alice, I give you a gentleman's word on it."

"And if I refuse?"

"Then," answered the young man, with a look of cold determination, "I believe your child lost to you beyond recovery."

"Atnee, I'll—"

The Bravo appeared about to spring again upon his prey but the other only rejoined,

"Matt, you know me. Had I died five minutes since, you would never have beheld your Alice in this breathing world again."

A shudder shook the outlaw, as he heard these words, and I marked the expression of Atnee's features. Seating himself again, he poured out a glass of spirits, and said, as he drank it:

"I'll drink with you, Master Atnee; I'll do your devil's work once more; and if I wronged you I'm sorry. But—" he paused, with the glass at his lips, and muttered in measured tones with a terrible oath: "if you desire me, or harm that child, I'll have your heart's blood, Atnee, wherever you are."

The Tory's bull eye fell before the fiery glow that shot from beneath Matt Blake's brows. But he mastered his unevenness, and stretched out his hand to his confederate: "Let us be friends again, Matt," he said, coaxingly; "you and I ought never to part in anger. All shall be well between us, when you come back."

Blake took his employer's hand, and drank his liquor at a gulp. But the scowl left not his brow for a moment; nor did he return Atnee's smile. He went out into the night again, to seek the fort at Sullivan's Island, and to earn a thousand pounds for the deed he was to do; but he hated Robert Atnee more than him who was to be his victim.

CHAPTER VII.

SULLIVAN'S ISLAND, 1776.

The flash, the smoke, the artillery roar,
 The answering volley, from front and rear;
 The wounded, slain, the bloody gore,
 Yet not a thought of fear.—S. W. DEWEY.

DAY-BREAK glimmered in gray light over the harbor and city of Charleston. The river-mist rose slowly from the surface of the water, and under a glowing sunrise, the fleet of Admiral Sir Peter Parker displayed its hunting, as it advanced to battle. It was an inspiring spectacle; for nearly fifty vessels, comprising nine ships of the line and forty transports, ranged up the channel, with their canvas set to the soft breeze; and the fast sunbeams, glancing on them, made all these ships appear like wings of fire.

Moultrie, on Sullivan's Island, foresaw that if the engagement should be protracted, his small store of ammunition must be exhausted before its termination. Like Putnam at Bunker Hill, he resolved that every shot should tell; and his feeble armament was therefore mounted in such a position that it commanded diagonally the advancing vessels, while the powder (scarcely five thousand pounds altogether) was distributed in due proportions to the guns, under the care of his own regimental officers.

The fort-defenders of the city could cast their eyes to the left, and see the houses covering their own shores, crowded with those dearer to them than life. They needed no mere inspiring spectacle to nerve them for conflict.

The river-fogs disappeared, and a hot June sun began to send its scorching rays. Moultrie moved up and down along the ramparts, smoking his short pipe, and encouraging the soldiers. Marques, tall theightful, moved about, exhorting and glancing with his eager eyes at the Indian war-giants which made up his force of brave men.

"We have hot work, and a long day before us, Captain," said Moultrie, to young Riker, who was just then "on the double counter at the head of the enemy's broadship, letting her go up to keep cool." Saying this, the Colonel cracked a great pull of tobacco.

"The foe will find the work as hot, deathless," answered Riker, "and the day as long, if our powder holds out, sir."

"Our powder! it must be husbanded," said Moultrie. "I see, Captain, you understand the business, by the bearing of your gun. That's right, my young soldier! Look to the Commodore! look to

the two-deckers ! and we'll soon have them all between wind and water!"

"Look to the Cannadore ! look to the two-deckers !" ran in a roar, along the intrenchments, and the young officers of guns began to take ranges of the battle-ships. Moultrie smiled, and said : "No fear of men like these!" Then turning to meet Major Marion, who sprang down, followed by Jasper, and another athletic figure :

"Who is this?" he asked, sharply, apparently recognizing the last of the three.

"A new volunteer, who finds small favor in the eyes of my brave Jasper, however." So saying, the Major pointed to Matthew Blake, whose face had already been recalled by the commander as that of the man who had him aid the project of defending Sullivan's Island.

"So it appears, sir, you have altered your mind as regards our long-range ports," said Moultrie, scanning the volunteer's features.

"Whether I have or have not," answered the Bravo, carelessly, "I am here to do my duty in defending them—that is, if you deem me good enough for a target, Colonel!"

"We want men who can make targets of Britishers!" cried Sergeant Jasper.

"I can point a piece as true as any man on the island," rejoined Blake, scowling at the sergeant; and as he spoke, a gun from the Admiral's ship boomed heavily, and two frigates let go their anchors, and ranged abreast of the fortifications.

"Answer that shot, if you can point a gun, sir," said Moultrie to the man; "it's the signal for battle."

"I beg, sir, you will let me point the gun—" began Captain Riviere; but the Bravo had already swung the heavy carriage about with one hand, while with the other he seized a match, and stooping at the French, sighted the piece with a rapid glance. Next moment smoke and flame belched from the cannon, and Matt Blake, with a dry laugh, cried :

"Follow that, if you like!"

The stroke cleaving, discovered the shot ricochetting over the waves which on every wind was breaking high. It struck the flying Royalist frig in the hull, and scattered splinters in all directions from her planks.

A loud shout rose from the American lines, and Moultrie passed rapidly.

"Good," he said, "that's a good shot! Now, men, to the work!" and they rose. The Major, addressing Blake, "if Captain Riviere gives you orders in working his gun, remain with him."

"I shall obey him," said Riviere; "I shall be glad of a brace of guns."

Blake's shout died; but the battle had now begun in earnest, and he sprang forward to do his duty. From the ports of six frigates in the channel a tremendous burst of flame issued incessantly. The first

replied by volleys of small-arms and double-shotted cannon. Dense volumes of smoke wreathed over the water, and soared in white columns. The waves swelled, the beaches rocked under successive explosions. Heavy broadsides from the vessel's occasionally fired the clouds, permitting a momentary view of some swaying land, which at once became a mark for Moultrie's guns.

About a mile below the immediate theater of conflict, Sir Henry Clinton attempted a landing of regular troops to attack Sullivan's Island by boats; but the scheme failed of complete success, in taking their positions for a general attack, three frigates ran aground below the island, and lost all opportunity of testing their mettle.

Meantime the sun rose toward noon; the heat of battle intensified by its searching rays. The Americans, all grimed with powder, tore off their shirts, and fought wholly naked. The smoke-clouds rolled inland, and concealed the city; but the defenders knew that their friends were behind that dreadful curtain, listening to the din of the engagement.

Moultrie, calm amid the dizzy scene, smoked his pipe while inspecting his defenses, the bombs and balls falling unheeded about him. His courage became infectious; every man grew to be a hero at his gen. Marion's post was at an extremity of the fort, weakly defended by the hastily-constructed works. Surrounded by his rangers of the old wars, he pointed the guns, served out ammunition, and cheered the men to their duty. Sergeant Jasper, fighting near him, was so blackened and burned with sweat and powder as to be hardly distinguishable from the Legion Caesar, who was active under him, and who kept up a fire of dry remarks, and displayed his white teeth, as if there was not the remotest danger of their being knocked down his throat by a cannon-shot.

"Ki!" he yelled, as a rift in the smoke discovered the three British vessels fast among shoals, and with distress-signals flying. "KI! Maus' Jasper! we is pokin' fire into 'em!"

"Heah, you nigger! Look out for my jacket," cried a fine rebel young soldier, who was holding a match, as Marion's fired his gun. He pointed, in speaking, to a blue coat, the uniform of his regiment, which was slinging from a merlon, where he had carelessly thrown it.

"Me hab lia, Mass' McDevil!" cried Caesar, casting his self to earth, and stretching out his hand to catch it to ground; but ere he reached it, a canister-ball came whizzing through the air, and its strange, shrill noise, and still more singular whizzing, caused the boy, like a long swallow-tailed bird, while the soldiers around him, and the soldiers. Caesar fell back, as if struck him, his mouth wide and dilated eyes expressing the most hideous alarm; but he did not stir on, like a long swallow-tailed bird; while the soldiers along the whole western breastwork desisted with common consent from work and broke out into one of the liveliest and merriest laughs that ever made the wallkin ring. There, in the midst of deadly strife, with the

roaring of three hundred cannon around them, those gallant fellows laughed as freely as if en a piazza at Charleston.

" Caesar ! you black rascal ! why didn't you stop that ball ? " exclaimed the owner of the coat, shaking his fist in a humorous way at the negro.

" Ky ! " cried the black, recovering by degrees from his consternation.—" hi-yi ! what a shot dat was, fo' su'nin ! Might ha' ker-ral off dis yer chile, Mass' McDaniel, jis' like de jacket ! Oh, god-y ! look duh ! look dah, massy !—look at de coat, wud ye ? "

The soldier followed the negro's glance with his own, and beheld the coat hanged in the branches of a live-oak tree, in the rear of the fort.

" No harm's done," remarked he to Jasper, as he handed him his watch, and stepped to drink from a bucket beneath him. " The jacket has only charged pegs, you see. Howsoever, Caesar, you look out for these thieving cannon-balls, or they may make love to it altogether ! "

" Me look out for dat, Mass' McDaniel ! "

" And lie off now, you rascal, and get another supply of Jamaica," cried Jasper, kicking over the pail, which McDaniel's last draught had emptied.

" And say to the Colonel that we like it strong and sweet," cried Marion, with a grim smile. " Poor fellows, they are in a furnace," he added, glancing at the gunners.

" And look you, Caesar," said McDaniel, as the black passed him, " see that you fetch my coat from yon live-oak. It's a new one, and belongs to the State."

" Yes," cried the negro. " Dey cannon-balls is most too bad, dey is, massa; dey doesn't 'spect de State nor de sef'ers."

So saying, and burdened with his double commission, Caesar started off for her-quarters, where Colonel Moultrie, pipe in mouth, was superintending the mixing of a huge tub of " grog," composed of Jamaica spirits and water, sweetened with sugar-sap. The brave comander sat under the sweltering sun, endeavoring to " keep cool" under its heat, and patient under agonizing twinges of the gout, which had attacked him in the morning. Nearly could detect any expression save one of a thermometer, save when some spasm of pain forced an involuntary exclamation.

" Well, Caesar, you're a clever nigger, are you ? What were you a-saying about, when I called you ? "

" Golly ! Mass' Ketchum, wud you like to eat it ? " cried the negro, pointing to the jacket. " But who's a-nit McDaniel's friend, and a-fixin' to shoot stones, ah ! on sudden, and wear his hand in both pockets. Dis sile is, Mass' Moultrie, in yonder oak.

The commander joined with those around him in a hearty laugh at Caesar's jest; and then, ordering his bucket to be replenished, proceeded in his pleasant way to overlook the manufacture of the fragrant beverage, at the same time giving kindly orders to the men

at his black-muzzled twenty-fours, who had sustained the heat of the action. Caesar, burdened with his bucket of grog, set out on his return to Marion's post; but recollecting Sergeant McDaniel's orders to regain his coat, proceeded by a trifling detour to gain the oak-tree at the rear of the fort, which had arrested the incoming cannon-ball in the act of firefly. At this stage of the engagement, the firing on both sides was extremely severe—a cannoneer being kept up by the two fifty-gun ships, which, with springs on their cables, rode opposite the fort, supported by four heavily mounted frigates, and the bomb-ketch *Tar-wer*, with her blazing shells. A continuous shower of missiles fell into the swampy soil, and upon the myrtle and palmetto trees which grew on Sullivan's Island. Across the rear of the fort a strip of soil had been left to the live-oak trees, one of which McDaniel's coat was hanging, and thither Caesar picked his way, carefully balancing his bucket of grog, and unhampered by the trail of balls on every side. As he went, he exchanged remarks with the soldiers who were breaching themselves at intervals away from the ramparts.

"Take care of the bomb-shells, snatty-fie," cautioned a half-naked riflemen, who was cutting a palmetto-stick to replace a ramrod which had been carried from his hand by a chain-shot.

"And take care of that grog, even though you kick the bucket," remarked another wild fellow, as he matched a quartern loaf.

"Hi-yi," returned Caesar, "nebber you fear. Dis yer scur-chile knows de lark of Johnny Bull-log."

"Lock out, Sunbo; you'll get the headache," exclaimed another, as a heavy shell appeared in the air, curving through the smoke with a lurid light.

Caesar glanced upward and beheld the terrible missile hovering just above him, and apparently ready to surge upon his skull.

"Ky," he yelled, springing to the right, and immediately sunk to his waist in the black mud of the swamp. The bomb-shell at the instant crashed down, burying itself in the moist ooze, within half a dozen feet of him.

"Dat fire is put out, sartain," splattered Caesar, struggling to regain his footing *en terra firma*, and holding his bucket at arm's length, so that he lost scarcely a gal of its contents.

"You've had a harrow escape, darkey," remarked the soldier who had been managing his treest. "Now, give me a mug of grog, and I'll help you out again."

Caesar returned to Marion without McDaniel and, with a coat of black mud on his own skin body, which soon became baked like leather under the sunbeams. Meanwhile the battle raged, and the exhausted cannoneers, after refreshing themselves with the spirits, ranged their guns upon the Admiral's ship, which had swung about, presenting her stern to the fort.

"Look to the Connoisse," cried Marion.

The order was answered by flaming jets and an explosion that

shock the island. Then rose a shout from the fort's defenders, and then followed an unbroken silence for five minutes. It was during this interval that the last round of powder was served out on the Island, and a dispatch sent to Governor Rutledge for more. The British, listening for the fort's fire, and hearing it not, supposed they were about to surrender, and the fleet's crews began to cheer loudly, in anticipation of triumph. But they reckoned prematurely; for again came a rush of flame and crashing shot from the whole fort, and, dealing devastation through the ships. Their cheers were徒然的, and they manned their guns again, answering with the united metal of five broadsides, earth and water rocking under the tremendous explosion. The battle-shafts were uplifted, and the sun's rays shone through them, as through a canopy of yellow gaze.

Marion pointed to the banner of the fort, which was waving in the breeze. Sergeant Jasper lifted his arms to it, and McDaniel, springing forward, raised his blue cap and cheered loudly; but at that moment another iron storm swept from the fleet. McDaniel's manly breast was before an embrasure, and as he waved his cap in honor of the flag of liberty, a cannon-shot stretched him dying before his comrades. Jasper was kneeling by his side in a second, and Marion grasped his hand. The poor fellow's nostrils were gushing blood. He strove to rise, but his strength failed, and he fell in the arms of his comrades.

"I die," he murmured, as they were bearing him away, his eyes shining with the last fires of patriotism. "I die, comrades, but you will fight on, for liberty and dear country."

At this moment a low murmur ran through the line, and all eyes were turned, as if instinctively, toward the flag. It hung apparently by a splinter, trembling and ready to fall. A cannon-ball had shattered the staff, and the next instant it swayed and fell over the rampart, upon the low beach beyond them. The hearts of the defenders sank, while an exulting shout arose once more from the enemy.

But Jasper saw the flag fall, and had already leaped upon the beach. His right hand was lifted, as if in appeal to heaven, and then, waving it to his countrymen, he plied forever the wall to the sand-claw. A crashing broadside from the fleet dimmed him yet. A furious shower of shot and bats, plowing the beach, stayed not his course. He passed along the entire front of the batteries to re-enforce his comrade. There, while four hundred heights above in a silent cloud in the darkness of night, he laid and bore upon the flag from the shattered staff.

This brave man seemed to bear a charmed life, for not a shot struck him of the hundred raining around. He called for a sponge-staff to be thrown from the ramparts, and there, kneeling on the beach, fastened upon it the rescued banner. Then, waving it over his head, Jasper mounted the wall, and planted once more over his applauding comrades the flag of their free America.

Clouded were the eyes that saw the flag fall, and heavy the souls that sunk with it. But such a mighty shout arose from Sullivan's Island when the bright sun shone again in the sunlight, as never could be overpowered by the roar of artillery. That shout was the American hurrah. Working at the battery under his charge, Captain Riviere gallantly sustained his part in the battle; bearing himself more like a trained warrior than as one who had don off his usual garments for those of a soldier. His voice echoed only the orders to "fire at the double-deckers," and "raise the flag!" and the brave men around him, who were nearly fainting under the fiery heat, caught his inspiring glance, and braced themselves anew for conflict.

Next Blake, at one of the guns, watched his young chief with covert looks; and gradually, as the fight degenerated, he consented to become imbued with its spirit, and obey with alacrity the commands of his superior, even to a bold response, when the wild burrah of cheers broke forth. The man lacked not bravery, and the bull-like determination of the defense satisfied his stubborn nature; so that he whirled the gun-carriage about, as if they were no more than playthings, and exposed himself at the embrasures with a recklessness that appeared to mock at danger.

The thoughts of the two men—Riviere and Blake—were akin in sentiment at times; for the one recalled his gentle bride, while the memory of a cherished child tugged at the other's fierce heart.

Meantime, the combat raged on; the cannon-puffs shaking earth and wave, the smoke-clouds enveloping ship and fort in a sulphurous fire. At intervals, as Captain Riviere looked toward Blake's gun, he met the bravo's eye, which still only felt; and at times, also, Blake felt under his hand sleeve a small French pistol, which he had loaded to the muzzle. On such occasions the man would mutter: "He's a brave youth, but his life is not worth a thousand pounds to me! Not yet, though, not yet!" And then he would wind his canon, and send its contents tearing over the water.

Once, when a great broadsword was dashed from the British, Major Blake felt a sudden, suddenly grasped the wrist, and drew it suddenly from his gun. As he looked more steadily, the owner of the hand, he saw that it was Captain Riviere, and at the same instant uttered a curse. It seized the piece, and bated its temper. Then the eye of his young chief but marked the major's face, and he truly had interest to see the man's side. This is the moment when the man every fear, and in his rage in the cannon, had dropped and exploded at his feet.

"Take care, my man!" cried Riviere. "We can not spare you yet."

"He has seen my life," muttered the bravo, "and I have lost my thousand pounds."

Again the batteries roared, belching out their storms of iron. But Major Blake wanted no more. He wheeled his gun, and applied the

match mechanically, maintaining a sullen silence throughout the changing fortunes of the fray. Those near him noticed that he drank often from the rum-flask, though the liquor appeared to have little effect upon him; but none could know what a fierce struggle was going on in the brave's mind; none could see how the blood surged within him when Ernest Riviere crashed him occasionally at the gun.

"Fush!" muttered the captain. "What was this popping that he has suddenly inserted? curse, but that I am one more for the work he is at. 'Twas a shot that dislodged him; he would have kept some dog-aside to save the carbine's skin, doubtless. But," he said, with a sigh, "I can't see the boy is fit here—not here."

This struck a glaze in the brave, as he doggedly served his gun. Bales-fily dashed the lurid glare of that broadside which swept away Sergeant McDaniel, crashing even that cannon-ball which severed the flag-staff. But Duke went on with his work unheedingly, till the powder gave out, and the fort fire slackened from lack of it. Then, while the night grew dark, cheers arose from the British, the oath only dimmed again and again, and leaped madly against the parapet, till Marion and all the gallant men had run a gauntlet of broadsides, and brought back more than a hundred from an armed sleep in the river.

Another evening reached. The sun's ink had bailed the city. Twilight came and darkness, and then the stars clambered over the scene of strife. But the fire of the fort was kept up incessantly, till, as the hours passed, one after another of the British war-vessels drew off from her anchor, and at length the signal-lanterns of retreat swung from the Alatuck's peak. Moultrie took a long whiff of his pipe, and said:

"I think we have driven them at last."

"Yonder," said Marion, "are some disabled crafts that might be recaptured." He pointed, in speaking, to the three vessels grounded on the shoals, one of which, the *Aston*, lay high upon the rocks. "With your leave, Colonel, I will take a few men, and reconnoiter them."

"God be with you, Major, go," returned Moultrie; and in a few moments the brave partisan had selected a small detachment, and was passing, in a boat, to the stricken frigate, which had been already abandoned by her crew. For a short while the volunteers was Captain Riviere, and, as he swam, with Marion, on the Alatuck's peak, he saw the British ship take in the number of the gunner who had been laid low. At this instant, the British fleet was making all sail out of the channel.

"They are preparing salvoes from their own guns," muttered Marion. "I hope they won't do it."

"Well thought off," said Major Marion; and the work being given, a last broadside from the *Aston*'s peers out, and after fifteen volleys, scattering death and terror among their crews. The battle of Sullivan's Island was finished, and the British beaten. The cowed

and crippled lion slunk away before a log-fort, manned by four hundred militia men.

"Now to the boats!" commanded Major Marion. "This ship is afire and may blow up in a moment."

The *Americus* lost no time in obeying this order, but crowded over the bulwarks to their boats; for the water, no longer illuminated by flashes of artillery, had become dark around the small frigate. It was at this instant, when Captain Riviere was awaking till the last man had safely descended, that he felt himself struck suddenly from behind, and, toppling forward, felt some one rousing up. Instinctively he grasped the oar, but too late to retain his footing. He fell heavily over the *Americus's* quarters, dragging with him a heavy oar, which he clutched with a desperate grasp. A dull plugh and smothered cry, and Riviere and the object he held sank in the deep waters.

"Away! push off! The fire is near the magazine! We'll all be blown up!" were the confused shouts that rose from the boat.

"Pull away," they cried, "or we are lost!"

The boat shot out into the stream, away from the *Americus's* dark shadow. Suddenly, along her decks, and up her rigging, leaped flames durtel, while a fierce light flashed from stern to stern. Then she blew up, her scattered fragments falling in showers on land and river.

The boat containing Marion and his men was rowed slowly back to the fort; but a gloom hung over all its crew. Captain Riviere, the brave volunteer Captain, came not back from the doomed *Americus*. Neither he nor the dark gunner returned to Charleston, when the joy-bells of triumph rung out, to welcome the defenders of Sullivan's Island.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DUMMY.

A weed hung by;
A withered floweret, plucked to-day.—Axon.

On the bank of a small river, near the borders of South Carolina and Georgia, stood, in 1773, a old house, which, during the Indian war preceding the Revolution, had been a post-house, and a post-inn, till the Indians had taken it. The outside walls were made of logs, and had defended the interior from more than one savage attack in the past, and gave promise of good service in the future. A growth of woods along the river, and behind the plantation appurtenant to

this dwelling formed a natural bulwark; inclosing out-houses occupied by the servants of the castle; and a wide avenue of oaks led from the front door to a highway about a quarter of a mile distant.

The river-banks were grown with thickets and dense underbrush on all sides, which afforded cover for game close to the house and its detached huts. It offered cover, too, on a sultry evening, in the autumn of 1778, for a troop of some two-score partisans, whose horses were picketed under the trees. They were a rough company, clad in balaclava and fastian, and armed with a variety of weapons; and the lack of discipline among them shewed that they belonged to the irregular cavalry who, at this period, waged bitter strife on the marshes of Carolina.

The members of this motley band were scattered in all directions; some ranging among the negro-quarters, bantering the wenchies, others seated or lying on the sward, and others drinking and smoking in groups. In front of one of the huts sat a swart-browed man, whose shaggy felt hat nearly hid his features, and whose heavy frame was encased in a garb half nautical and half military, consisting of a sailor's pea-coat, with anchor buttons, and yellow sailor's breeches, much the dirtier for long wear. A pair of dragoon's pistols, and a formidable hunting-knife in his belt, gave a fierce look to this personage, which seemed to impress with great reverence a negro who stood near.

"Squire Atnee's plantation! umph!" quoth the trooper, emitting a puff of tobacco-smoke from his bearish mouth. "You lazy dogs have a good master, I hear."

"Dar's no scut to find wi' maues'," answered the negro. "Mass' nubber work nigga mon'trous hard."

"Not a big family, to have much work to do up there, I fancy," said the partisan, jerking his head in the direction of the dwelling house, whose chimneys could be discerned over the thick grove surrounding it.

"Ky!" exclaimed the black. "Reekin Mauss' Bob's family is Mauss' Bob hisself. Dar ain't no heip o' white folks 'round dis yer place."

"Eh, Snowball? Does your master live alone?"

"Mass' Bob live anywhar' he please, sah," answered the negro. "It's today, yar to-morrow—dat's Mauss' Bob. Ole Gattan tak' him to de house, and dir's a couple o' ole darkies to cl'ar 'way d' chais. We is fill niggers, down yer, we is."

"But where's your master's wife?"

"Ky! Mauss' Bob he got no wife."

"But he's got a chill, Snowball. I've hearl tell he hal a litt. daughter, deaf and dumb. Didn't he bring her from Charleston, eh?"

The partisan in asking this question, removed his pipe from his mouth, and regarded the negro with a sharp look. But the black suddenly broke into a loud laugh.

"Kys!" he exclaimed. "Is dat yar dummy Mauss' Bob's daughter? Spec's mauss' keer a heap for his own flesh and blood den."

"Then the call is here!" cried the partisan, grasping the negro's arms, and speaking in a husky voice.

"De dummy, sah?"

"Yes, Snowball, what about the dummy?"

"A'mst done, mauss' ranger," replied the negro, sinking his head. "Dar's no chance for poor dummy, Aunty Phyllis says."

"Black scoundrel! what do you mean? Where's the call—the chil', I say?" roared the trooper, in savage, thoughtless tones. "What do you mean by saying there's no chance for her?"

"Kase Aunty Phyllis says dat dummy's suitin' fo' the san-lawn. Lor' bress us, is mauss' ranger got de sickies?"

The negro stared at the partisan, who appeared to be silvering, as if suddenly seized by an ague-fit, and whose white lips mutuated some sounds which were slowly shaped into words.

"Want to see de dummy, sah? Bress de Lor', she's over yonder, at Aunty Phyllis' cabin in de swamp," answered the Negro. "Follow along, mauss' ranger, I's just gwine dar."

The white man motioned with his hand, and the negro prodded him, across a corner of the clearing, and down a narrow pathway through the thick woodland, till they reached some meadows gradually bordering the river. Here stood a weather-beaten house, surrounded by the customary small garden-path. A negress, whose age might have been a century, so shrivelled and decrepit she seemed, sat at the open hall-door; and to this creole the field-negro addressed an inquiry concerning "the dummy." But before she could respond, the partisan had pushed roughly over her threshold, and at the same moment uttered a loud cry.

"What de debble dat?" cried the negro, running past Aunt Phyllis, to follow the white intruder, and to discover him kneeling on the clay floor of the hut, his hands clenched in his shaggy hair, his teeth set, and his eyes fixed in a glassy stare upon the object before him. The negro did not require to be told that this object was "the dummy."

A female child, about eight years old, lay on a mattress of coarse hemp, half covered with dirty cotton cloth. Her face, hideously fair, was pinched as from long sickness, and her neck and arms were worn to mere bone and translucent skin. The impress of suffering appeared stamped on every line, exceptive only the eyes, which were large and brilliant, and still at this moment of jolted recognition. Her thin fingers were locked together, and clutched round the white man kneeling beside her pallet. Her lips emitted a strange guttural sound.

"Bress le Lor'," ejaculated the field-negro, passing in astoundedness, as he encountered this scene, and immediately afterwards he held the partisan throw himself forward, to clasp the young girl in his arms, and lift her tenderly to his breast, kissing her repeatedly,

while heavy tears droppel from his eyes upon her pale cheeks. Turning to the crone who had hobbled forward on her stick, the slave whisperel in a low voice :

"Aunty Phyllis—maybe's de angel ob de come to car' poor dummy off."

The old woman took no notice of her fellow-African's remark, but waited quietly a few moments while the white man continued to embrace the child, and the child uttered its low brooding, like the cooing of a dove. Presently, however, her eye caught the litte one's, and, hobbling forward, she laid her hand upon the stranger's arm.

"Dat chile's cut o' breff, massa sojer," said she scifly. "Please let de darlin' talk to Aunty Phyllis. Dummy knows Aunty Phyllis."

The sick chil' lifted her weak elso from the rough man's bearded throat, and began to make feeble motions with her small fingers. Aunty Phyllis dropped her cane, and raising both of her shriveled hands, replied by similar signs. Thus, during several moments, a pantomime went on between the two—the negress nodding and shaking her withered head, the child languidly shaping speech upon her fingers, in the rule language of the deaf and dumb.

Thus Aunty Phyllis learned that the mute waif of her cabin was the daughter of that fierce man who held her in his arms, and in return, she related to the partisan how the child had been brought to the plantation two years before, by her master's nurse, Gattan, and had been thrown into the charge of Aunt Phyllis, as a helpless "dummy," to perish or survive as nature might determine; how she had taught the little one rule signs, and learned to interpret its wants; but how mouthy mouth, it had pined and grieved as if for something lost, till it dwindle to a swallow, "refuse l its soul, forget us play," and sink so low that death's door now seemed open for its passage to a world where suffering is no more.

The rough, dark man, the wondering field negro, the withered old woman leaning on her stick, and the beautiful mute, pallid and child-like, were strange contrasts, in that hut, when the sunset beams shone through sarrumling tree-tops, robing them with warm light. Matthew Duke, brave, pirate, murderer, kissed his dying chil' again, and laid her to sleep on the coarse pallet—kissed her tenderly, putting the damp curls on her forehead; then, charging hisness Phyllis and her fellow-black, that they should speak no word of his visit to any mortal, and giving to each a broad piece of silver, to insure their silence, he went out to the camp of his ~~overrider~~ again, with a new purpose in his stormy soul.

CHAPTER IX.

LAURELWOOD HOUSE.

Embowered in woods,
Deep in a sylvan vale.—THE FRIENDS,

In what manner Matthew Blake escaped from a watery grave when the frigate *Aetœn* lay up in Charleston Harbor, will be explained at the proper time. Let it now suffice, that he found himself a cooper in a Tory land, after having served nearly twenty months as a sailor, on board the British fleet in American waters.

Meanwhile his employer, Robert Atree, had pursued his career in other quarters. The repulse of Admiral Parker, an event which filled every patriot heart with joy, was to the Tory a bitter mortification, and the more so, that it was speedily followed by an accusation against himself, founded on alleged complicity with the enemy. He could not wait to confront the charge, but departing from Charleston with all possible alacrity, retired to his plantation on the borders of Georgia, there to watch more safely the progress of events.

Meantime, when joy-bells, and Montrœ's brave soldiers marched proudly through Charleston's streets, the multitude greeting them with cheers and shouts, there was one honest soul, at least, which could not mingle in the general jubilee. The little band of volunteers, on whose roll the name of Ernest Riviere was inscribed, bore a shrouded flag in their midst; and when it passed the house of old John Riviere, there was silence, and the slow step of a funeral march, to tell of one who came not with his comrades.

What would have been the horror of those brave men had they suspected the foul treachery which had deprived them of a friend and brother; or divined that one who had plotted the murder of Ernest Riviere was one of his own kind and country? Neither the arch-conspirator nor his instrument could be arraigned, and the name of the missing patriot, like that of the fugitive, soon ceased to be spoken in Charleston.

Robert Atree, though sorely to forego the advantage which British success might have insured to him, yet exulted in the certainty that both Riviere and Matt Blake had perished by the sudden explosion of the *Aetœn*, on whose decks the two had been fastened together. Henceforth he deemed himself secure from the discovery of certain dark transactions, whereof Blake was the evident, and failing no further interest in the brave's unfortunate death, which had brought him with him to Laurelwood, he soon abandoned its delights to the

tender memories of a negro household. The interposition of Aunt Phyllis at no seemed her poor "duty" from entire neglect, and such, indeed, as we have seen, that the house's master at last grudgingly consented to receive once more the embittered widow of his dead father.

Matt, who could not the record of Aunt Phyllis to divine at once what might have cast the fit gloom over her, wonderingly asked his popular friend, "What care thou for me?" — "I care the devil if you care not," was the other's reply. "I know all about you, and your past, and I am not doing the world a service at all, when I tell you always before him, and after many fruitless attempts he would not sleep from the heat, and joined a band of robbing braves, for the single purpose of sacking out the tobacco-chest of Atney, in whose charge he believed his little one to be. After tracking the robber during four months, he at length discovered his treasure, and we shall now follow him to the house of Robert Atney, who, at the same hour, was preparing plot with few confederates.

The sun had disappeared, and the woods were in twilight. When Matthew Blake left the land of Aunt Phyllis, and proceeded to one of the houses before which he had picketed his horse, entering this, he remained a few moments, and then emerged, having exchanged his peasant for a young man's frock, and left both pictures and sober mattock and his rifle equipments in the larder.

The Bravo's appearance was much changed by the alteration of his dress, and the evening shadows, now closing in, enabled him to pass, without being observed, from the bushes in neighbourhood of the long camp, under a high line of sandberry which surrounded the old residence. Here, скользя under the foliage, he crept by the dark, backslipping into the open curtains, and observe all who entered the dwelling.

When lights began to appear, the bravo saw the old negress Gatica, and her grandchild, Felipe, passing and retreating within, through a balcony of the house overlooking the balcony. He resolved if possible to get away from the hill himself in one of the houses, of which there were many, and sit down. Crouching the while, he peering under his visor, he soon perceived a light of conjecture.

The windows of the upper room were hung with velvet and silk, and looking in they were dark. The curtains, at first visible, were all drawn off, but Matt observed it that the elegant curtains were all drawn so that they could be seen easily, and that it would be soon visible. He decided, therefore, to remain where he was. The old lamp-post was filled with smoke, and the wind was strong, so that it was impossible to see far off. The old woman had been seated in the chair, and the old man, who was a negro, was standing, holding a large pipe, and it was to him but a moment's work to extinguish himself in the chimney recess, without disturbing the appear-

ance of a single leaf. Thus, curtained by flowers and foliage, he could observe whatever transpired in the upper room.

For some moments after the Bravo had taken his position, the apartment remained silent and tranquillity, though transiently illumined by the lights of a candelabra on the table. Then the clatter of horses' hoofs without, and presently the sound of voices, announced to Blake that some one was approaching. His heart beat quickly, in recognizing Robert Atree as one of two persons, who, booted and spurred, now clattered into the apartment.

The Tory was clad in a brown riding-suit, and armed with sword and pistols, which he presently threw upon a side-table. His companion was recognised by Blake as the Captain of the troop of Terry partisans, of which he himself was a member, and which was quartered at this hour on the plantation. Imitating his host, this man unbuckled a heavy sword, and laid it across one of the polished arm-chairs drawn up near the table.

"Captain Richard Yancey, sit and eat," cried Atree, in a gay tone. "If our ride has sharpened your appetite as it has mine, we shall do old Gattan's scugal fire some honor."

"Gad, Atree, I'm wolfish, I promise ye," responded the partisan Captain, whose square jaws, yellow eyes and sensual lips denoted a temperament not averse to animal comfort, and who, without ceremony, threw himself into an arm-chair and drew it up to the table. Gattan, the housekeeper, here made his appearance, followed by a brace of elderly negroes with smoking dishes, and the two companions were soon engaged in discussing what was likely set before them.

"Gad, Atree, you've a paradise of a place here. What a danged comfortable thing to be rich, eh? Here am I chasing round after rebels, from Dan to Beersheba, with no pay, and only a chance of plunder now and then."

"Pay and plunder will come in good time, Captain. Let the king get Charleston again, and you'll come in for your share, never fear. His majesty's forces will soon overrun Georgia."

"There's that ringer Marion and his rugged devils, stirring up trouble again. Zounds, Atree, 'twould take a bigger army than Prevost's to keep the cursed bettors from spreading treason as they do cotton-pods. There's only one way to get on with 'em, Atree. You all an' quarter like it. But at present that's all I can tell, you know."

"I trust our unhappy South Carolinians will return to their allegiance to good King George, Captain Yancey," said Atree. "Let us drink his majesty's health, and call him to the Name of Lincoln and his northern ragamuffins."

"Tis true, then, that Lincoln is coming here. But he'll yet catch Prevost asleep like Bargeyle, eh?"

"I fancy not," rejoined Atree, with a laugh. "We'll hang him and his Yankees as long as the Carolines grow trees for the purpose."

"That'll be comfortable—Gal, it will, Atnee," cried the Tairy Captain, clinking his wine-glass. "But, ding it, man," he continued, lowering his voice, "and send away those nigger hags, and let's have the yaller lady up."

"First talk of my business, Captain," said the host, with a slight sneer, as he motioned Gattan and the other saddle-adopts to leave the room. Meantime, the concealed bravo held his breath to listen.

"All right, Atnee, business first, pleasure afterward," quoth the trooper, pouring out his wine. "We understand matters, you know. I'm yours, till death us do part, as the parson says, you know."

"You tell me that old John Riviere and his daughter had already set out from Charleston, and are now on the road to Beaufort."

"That's it, Atnee—slow coaches, change of air for the young lady—doctor's prescription, sea-shore, you know."

"And you are sure they can be intercepted, Captain?"

"Before fifty-eight hours pass, they'll strike the Hill Fork, and there I'll bag them, like partridges, sir—provided we agree on terms, you know," answered the trooper, replenishing his glass, and filling that of his host; after which he held the decanter up to the light, pretending to scrutinize it. "Gal, that's good stuff of yours, Atnee," he continued. "Let's drink to my Brown beauty, Philippa."

Atnee drank carelessly, eying the trooper's inflamed countenance. "Yancey," he said, abruptly, and in a measured voice, "you shall have the gal, but by Jove, you must treat her well."

"Oh, never you mind, Bo Atnee, when there's a woman concerned," returned the partisan, with a leer. "I'm tender as a lamb, Atnee. What's that the poet says? 'Lion in war, lamb in peace,' eh, you know?"

"This girl has been raised a lady, Yancey. She's proud and high-strung, and more than that, I promised never to sell her."

"Promised who?"

"Old Gattan, her grandfather, who saved my life once."

"That high-stepping old joker, eh? Oh, bethor your promise. You want Riviere's widow, and I must have your Brown beauty, say the poet, and the lamb is a lion—wreck her wench."

"I'm a son of a gun, Yancey; but Gattan must not know that I told about it. To-morrow, when I am ready for you, the gal shall go with us, or I'll bring her to the poet at Gattan's after dinner. It's just as you like, Yancey. I got a full moon to-morrow night at twelve o'clock, and then I can get past him. Do you comprehend the romance, Yancey?"

"Perfectly," replied the Captain. "Give me you, Atnee, for plotting, at any time. And now, have her up here, for a bit, eh, Atnee!"

The host pulled a bell-cord, and summoned the quadroon girl, who came, in company with Gattan. Filippa approached the table, but her eyes fell on encountering the trooper's bold gaze.

"The gentleman is a soldier of the king, and our good friend, Filippa," said her master. "He desires you to take a glass of wine with him."

"Filippa is not well to-night," interposed the old negro, observing that her green bliau, after shrunk from the table,

"Nay, 't is to my health, Gattan," responded Atnee, with a cool glance at his young slave. The poor girl started, and held out her hand for the glass which Atnee filled for her. Captain Yancey filled his own, never ceasing to regard her with admiring eyes.

"Now, my brown beauty, tip—*to your master's health, and may you love him to distraction.*"

Filippa had lifted the glass to her lips, but the trooper's words caused her to tremble so violently, that the wine was spilt plentifully.

"Here, touch my glass with your cherry lips, my brown beauty," cried the Captain, rising unsteadily, for the drosses of intemperance were mounting to his thick brain. "But Robert Atnee kill his hand upon him.

"I fear the girl is not well. Gattan, let Filippa retire with you—the Captain will excuse her to-night."

He squeezed the trooper's arm, pressing him back to his chair, while the negro hastened with her grandchild from the apartment.

"Deneed shame. Gal, Atnee, what right have you?—Brown beauty's my property, you know."

"Not yet," said the Terry, significantly. "Come, my brave Captain, we have work to-morrow. Let us drink our liqueurs."

Atnee filled again as he spoke, and drank with the Captain, who was fast becoming bewildered, and who harklessly accepted the attentions of an attendant, striveth to conduct him to his chamber. The Terry bade good-night to his guest, and was once more, as he thought, *alone*.

"This besotted marauder," he muttered, "shall never have the girl, if he were not, as he is, so necessary. But Louise P'ke must be mine, or her death secure me the reversal of my master's property. For such a stake, what is a slave-girl to me? I have the loss in her, in her will way, and I must abdicate that this brute Terry shall treat her well. But Louise and de Flavre, they must have a quarrel." Robert Atnee filled another glass of wine. "I am afraid of it," he resumed, "to-morrow night. I shall turn the tables on them." He took a long draw, slowly, and at last he laid, his broad, bald head back, letting loose the power of the bottle. But, though it was but a single drop, it stood at the mouth of the bottle. Before Atnee sipped his wine, but ere the glass was drained, an iron grasp was on his throat, and a dagger gleamed before his startled eyes.

"Ha! ha! Master Atnee," laughed Matthew Elake.

The tone of that remembered name caused Atnee's blood to congeal; as, struggling to escape, he gasped for breath, essaying to cry out, but in vain. His enemy's fingers were like a vice.

"I have come for my child, d'ye hear, Robert Atnee?—for my Alice, whom you stole from her bed. I swore, when we parted, that my revenge would follow you, if you pattered with me. Robert! I know that my child is here; and you—you shall die!"

Atnee struggled, but uselessly. The strong-armed man lifted him from the chair, bending back his head, and poised the weapon that he had flung for a fatal blow. But, ere it could fall, a white figure glided suddenly over the carpet, and interposed under the impending arm. Matthew Blake saw no face—it was hidden upon the Terry's bosom; but the white robe, the woman's form, unnerved him for an instant; and in the next, he felt the sharp chill of steel thrill through his side. The woman left stabb'd him, uttering a loud shriek.

Matt Blake heard the sound of coming feet, felt the blood trickling from his wound, and staggered back, his dagger falling to the floor. Then, turning with a superstitious dread, and rushing to the window, he flung himself over the balcony. His brain was dizzy, and as he fled through the dark avenue, he drew from his side, where it had been struck, a long, thin stiletto.

Meantime the Terry lay insensible on his arm-chair, where he had sunk, half strangled, when Blake released his hold. Overcome with pain and terror, he knew not that he was saved.

But as he lay, with closed eyes and discolored features, under the glare of the candle-light, Filippo, the quattroon, bent over him, pressing her lips to his pale forehead, while her brow, cheeks and neck, were crimson with burning blood.

Again had Filippo prayed for master's life. And now, as the negro Gattan entered, the quattroon pressed her finger on her lips and glided away as she came, like a spirit.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHILD'S GRAVE.

I will not pause—I will not tire,
Till wrong and stake my righteous ire.—TAYLOR.

MORNING broke over Laurelwood House, and the smiling landscape that once possessed it. The air grew fragrant with the scents of flowers, the leaves golden with sunshine, and every thing in nature seemed blessed and beautiful.

But to Robert Atnee, hastening to consummate his villainies, and

to the wretched Matthew Blake, talked of his revenge, the morning might as well have been barren of both perfume and brightness. The Tory and his partisan confederate, Yancey, were early on the road, and had left the plantation far behind them, ere the sun was two hours high. But it was near the midday before the negro, Aunt Phyllis, seated at her hut door, beheld a staggering man emerge from the swamp wood, into the clearing, and run toward her, with extended hands, in one of which was clutched a bloody weapon. She tattered to her feet, and essayed to cry aloud for help, but the paralysis of her tongue, and she could only sink back again, crouching beside her threshold.

Little had she to fear, however, from the wretched being, who, with unsteady motion and wandering eyes, approached and sunk on the sward before her door. It was Matthew Blake, but how changed from the fierce trooper who had found his chill under her roof the evening previous! The man's large frame was now weak as a child from loss of blood, and his mind was equally prostrated by the effects of delirium. During more than a dozen hours, since his abortive attack upon Alice, the Bravo had lain through darkness and light at the foot of a cypress tree in the swamp, where he had fallen exhausted, after his flight from the mansion. The stiletto, with which Filippa stabbed him, had pierced deeply, though not vitally, and occasioned a slow bleeding, coupled with fever. No human eye had watched, no human hand soothed the paroxysm which had afflicted the wretched man during all his hours of agony. Alone he had wrestled with pain, till the loss of blood relieved his fever, and left him barely strength to gain the hut of Aunty Phyllis, with one thought absorbing his miserable heart, and informing his dimly intelligent—*the thought of his dumb child, Alice.*

Alice! Her name had ever soothed Blake's indurated nature, and illumined his dark soul with glimmerings of humanity and love. It recalled his scattered senses, and drew his staggering steps to the nurse's bower, and he breathed it as he sunk before the door-sill. Aunt Phyllis quickly saw the man's condition, and conceiving that he must have been wounded in some recent *mélee*, hastened to render her assistance. She stooped and bound his still bleeding wound, and holding into the hat, returned with a cup of rum and sugar water, which she forced between his compressed lips. In a few moments he revivèd, and with returning consciousness, asked concerning his child. Aunt Phyllis shook her head, and the wretched父 or struggled with difficulty to his feet, and entered the hut with her.

The dumb girl lay upon her pallet, near the single window, shaded with thick vines, through which the sunshine could not glare; but the day was a sultry one, and the child seemed to be laboring for air, her breath coming quick and short. Her eyes were closed, her face pallid as marble, and damp with heavy perspiration. Matthew Blake crept himself beside the bed, and, with a wild look, gazed

upon his dying child, for she was indeed passing away. Another form at this moment darkened the narrow doorway; it was that of the old negro, who had, the night before, conducted the trooper to the hovel.

"Is ye here I a'ent Mass?" — "the black was beginning a sentence, when he caught sight of the brave, cowering over his child, and at once he paused, and crept softly toward the cradle, whose shriveled form was nestled upon her stool. Aunt Phyllis struck her hand signaling, and the two remained silent, regarding the father and his child.

The Southern sun rose high, and its beams fell vertically upon the low sun-porch. Matthew Blake's fever was gone, but more than physical torture racked his wretched soul. He groveled on the clay floor of the hut, swooning about, and writhing till the blood streamed again from his wounded side. Then he would become less violent, and lay over his child, wringing his hands, and laying his head close to his blower white cheek. But at last, as all mortal things end, so did the dambone's suffering existence. Her eyes sought those of her father, with a passing look of love, her blue lips feebly moved for a last kiss, and Matt Blake's darling was freed from pain forever.

Neither Aunt Phyllis nor her fellow-slave cared to disturb the dimly seen nook which the trooper sank after his last entrance of the child. He lay stretched upon the ground, cold and pale, with his jaws rigidly set, and only a spasmodic breathing, at intervals, defining that he lived. The two blacks busied themselves in preparing the body for burial, a task that required indeed but little labor; and it was not till the frail remains of beauty had been swathed and laid on a new cotton cloth, that the rough tabor again awoke to a realization of his loss. When he did, it was to exhibit no more violence of grief but he eagerly grasped the cup of rum which was held to him, and drained its contents at a gulp. Thus stimulated to life, he looked, with dry eyes and a scowling brow, on the shiny face of his dead, and slowly replied to Aunt Phyllis' questions concerning his child. Meantime the field hands had carried the news of "the boy's death" to the negro-quarters, and a crowd of blacks gathered at the latter door, eager to look upon the white child's face, which should be covered away forever.

Matt Blake, sitting at the bedside in gloomy apathy, regarded the intruders, nor listened to their low whispers. He only nodded at Aunt Phyllis's salute to him, and watched vacantly what followed. At sunset, the negro brought in a rude pine coffin, and when, at a late hour, a solemn procession went out, under the moonlight, and with torches, and traversed the dark swampy road, bearing the frail child, Mattew Blake walked, like one in a dream, leading the way. All child, Mattew Blake walked, like one in a dream, with head bowed, to the plantation burial place, and saw, without a word, the day cast upon all he had loved during years of toil and life.

But when, after the burial, the pitying blacks would have led him away, he shook them off, and threw himself prostrate upon the new grave. "Leave me!" he cried, hoarsely, to Aunt Phyllis. "Go your ways, and let me be alone!"

The negroes departed, and Matt Blake remained upon the fresh earth that covered the dust of Alice. The burial-place was at the end of the swamp, where the ground sloped from a ridge to the river near a fording-place. Tall trunks of palmettoes were scattered here and there, and there was a grave upon the highest part of the land, within which were several white tomb-sides, marking the resting-place of white masters, while the unlisting island graves of bondmen occupied the swamp-land below. The dead child had been laid on the exposed hillock-side, and upon it, and on Blake's form, the bright moonlight fell gloriously. But he, wretched man, received not of heaven or earth, as he tore his hair, and gnashed his teeth, calling upon the name of his lost one. Still prone on the clay he kept his vigils, and so was found by the field-negro and another black, who returned, after some hours, with food and a flask of rum, sent by the compassionate Phyllis.

"Mauss' ranger mus' eat a bit," said the slave. "I is yer bacon and sweet-tater is mighty good, mauss', and dar's a drop o' bathin' that's real. Drink it, miss'—it'll do ye good."

Blake seized the flask, and applied it to his lips, and ravenously devoured the viands.

"I is takin' keer o' mauss's pony," continued the black. "Poor critter might ha' don starved to death—"

"My horse!" cried the trooper, "ah! where is he—and the band?"

"Done gone, mauss'—all rode clean away, long wi' Miss Robert and de Cap'n."

Blake pressed his hands to his forehead, and appeared to ponder a moment; then, with fierce abruptness, he cried:

"Bring me the mare—I must be off from this."

"Is you strong enough to ride, miss' ranger?"

"Bring me the mare," repeated Blake, "and raaa—do you hear?—another flask of the spirits. There's money for you."

He thrust his hand under his wag-her's flock, and, drawing out a pouch, took from it a couple of silver dollars, and handed them to the black. Then, turning his head, he threw himself back upon the grave. The blacks withdrew, terrified at his strange demeanor.

A sudden image had entered into the man's breast, with the mention by the negro of his horse. The spirit of Robert Athene, riding, as he had overheard him plot, to waylay the merchant Riviere and his niece, presented itself vividly to his heated fancy, and he resolved, at the moment, to pursue and carry out his purpose of revenge upon his enemy. Once in possession of his brain, this desperate project overmastered all other impulses. No sooner had the negro done his errand than he arose to his feet, and began to examine the bandages which

confined his wounded side. His repeated draughts of spirits had lent artificial vigor to his iron frame.

While thus occupied, the trooper heard a sound in the distance, which his quick ear recognized as the clatter of horses' hoofs, and in a few moments he beheld a dozen riders approaching by the river-bank, whom he judged, from the swamp cemetery, at a full gallop. From his position on the hill-side, Blake could see them as well as to the right and left, and cast down his horse, to permit them to pass him. He was delighted in such odd objects, and knew that they were soon to pass him and strike into strong relief; and he saw that they were the own countrymen of Yancey's troop, though clad like them, in the rough garments of manteau and wool-sack. "They must be rebel scouts," muttered the partisan. "I hear they were cut on the borders. What care I for rebels or king's men? My enemy is Atnee."

As the man said this to himself, he heard the noise of hoofs on the woodland swale, and immediately afterward the negro appeared, riding from the swamp-wood, out into the moonlight among the graves. He recognized his own mare, and at the same instant became aware that the sound of her feet had reached the horsemen at the ford; for there was an instantaneous movement of the whole into line upon the river-bank. Matthew Blake at once decided on his course; and no sooner did the negro dismount at his side, than he leaped upon him and clattered to the saddle. Then, bidding the Negro an abrupt "good-night," he galloped down the hillock toward the pond, and was soon in front of the strange horsemen.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" was the salutation which Blake received, as he pulled up his mare, and lifted his bug-eyed eyes to him who appeared to be the leader of the troop. The two started, both at the voice and countenance which confronted him.

"Hi!" he muttered, involuntarily, "it's the ranger Jasper."

"And I know your face," quickly responded the other. "It is pale now, but I have seen it gashed with powder-smoke. You were at S. C. this Island—a ranger."

"I was a volunteer ranger in that big fort-takin'," rejoined Blake, "and paid dear enough for it afterward. But it's a long story, sir, and will do for the present. At present, if it's agreeable, I'm a volunteer at your service." Blake said this in an off-hand way, at the same time not very desiring the ranger, whose ready references of Slavey's Island he could not recollect so vividly.

"If you're a true boy," replied the "old sergeant," "I'll tell of that last night as we push on. If you be my co-trader, God help you."

So saying, Jasper turned his horse's head to the ford, and the troop rode forward, under a full moon that silvered all things with its light. Matt Blake turned in his saddle on going the opposite bank, and cast a parting look on the hillside where he had hidden

away the treasure of his dark life. Then, dashing his hand across his brow, he muttered a curse, coupled with the name of Robert Attee, and spurred on at the side of his new leader.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FOREST AMBUSH.

With foot to foot, and steel to steel,
They met and waged their frequent war,
Till all the green turf ran with gore.—MARRON

MANY hours after the meeting of Matt Blake with Jasper, the ranger, these two new allies might have been discovered, had they not studiously sought concealment, halting, reluctantly, in a thick, woolly covert, curtailed from the highway by a pentent growth of foliage. Their steeds were drawn up immobile in a wide fissure of the bank, above which hung the branches of a gnarled sycamore, overran with parasitic vines that completely veiled the figures of horses and riders. Behind, in the forest-recesses, were the remainder of Jasper's small troop, alike motionless in the green shadow.

From the elevated position which they had selected, our killer-horseman could command the highway, on either side, and track its sinuous course in ascents and descents, at intervals for several miles, though it was lost, here and there, in long stretches of woodland.

"Our short course across the country, and the speed of our file, ought to have gained us a good day's march, comrade," said Jasper to his dark-browed associate. "Yet, here are we, at the Hill Fork, with no signs of your marauders as yet. How is that, comrade?" And the sergeant's sharp eye flashed on Matt Blake, as if it would penetrate his thoughts. But the outlaw scarcely met his own glance, as he replied, moodily :

"We are here, at the Hill Fork, sure enough; and we have gained, I reckon, a day's march. Well, let us hold here."

"Hold?—Hold! I told you so, comrade, to-night or to-morrow."

"My bones are older than yours, Sergeant; nevertheless, I can tell two o'clock of last night, two o'clock in the morning, I say; this, Blake held his hand to the right and left, and Jasper exclaimed at once :

"To the right, comrade, and I ask your pardon for what I said just now. There are clouds of dust rising over yon valley, and to the left of the forest yonder."

"Ay, whoever they be that make them, we shall find all here to

"lace not far from this ambush of ours," rejoined the bravo. "The valley just below us here will ring with hoots ere an hour go by."

"You are right; they must meet in yon hollow," returned Jasper, "and a nittable angle for snuff is this Hell Fork, comrade."

The two watchers became silent, each intent on following the movements of those wreaths of white dust which were at first hardly discernible in the distance, but grew larger and more palpable as they approached each other. So great had been the delay of Major Blane's column that he had passed the road to the camp of the party of Captain Yancey, and passed the camp of it with success. It was probable he could have easily halted a single day, or even longer, in advance of the fiery troopers, who but for his own knowledge of double the length of the trail, He was thus granted a narrow margin of time to set his men in array, and to bring his men and their leader up to a stand, when I joined the bold partisan an opportunity of interposing at the right moment, and perhaps derailing the nefarious schemes in progress.

It was not long before the approaching cavalry could be distinguished feebly, as they crossed the more exposed portions of highway, between patches of woodland. Their course, being around the low hill-sides, prevented either from discovering the other, while both continued under the watchful eye of the concealed rangers above them. As they approached, I, Jasper saw that the force with which he must contend was at least double his own, while that of the party which Yancey would consist of only four mounted men, and a carriage drawn by two horses.

"In that coach, probably, is the pernicious whom they seek to kidnap or murder," remarked the ranger; and her father, it is likely, his comrade; for these in saddle are all black, if my eyes can be depended on."

"The merchant's servants, I don't," answered Blake. "But see! the trooper has crossed the road to the right of us, in the hollow. Then, what's that? where they are they yon show-dragging coach creeps round to them?"

"I suppose it is the ranger's master; and that those in the road of his side have stopped to intercept him?" I said. "Pardon me, sir, but I think a slave personified is it? as they bear the coat of a soldier on the front, and the cap of a trooper on the rear." Pardon me, sir, but I think it is the master of his own in Yancey's partisan band. It is now clear that the lead of the host, immediately in front of the coach, which covered in the ranger, and appeared to discover the approach of troops in what once, for he uttered an exclamation, turned his horse's head, and clattered back as he had come.

"Thank you, master sent, for giving us just the bit of news we wanted," said Jasper, with a smile, as he heard the hoof-beats die away. "And now, comrades, let us make ready for our work." So saying, the wary ranger touched his horse's rein softly, and the

trained animal cautiously moved into the wood. Matt Blake followed, and as he rode up, Jasper stretched out his hand to him saying:

"I ask your pardon, for misdoubting you somewhat this morning. There's my hand, as a true comrade in the fight, and when that's over, you shall tell me what you like about yourself."

The outlaw took the offered hand, but no smile lit up his dark face, as, in response to the honest ranger, he muttered:

"I care not how hard and desperate the fight may be," and then rode on in silence.

The dozen rangers under Jasper's command stood each at his master's heel, bridle in hand, while their steeds crept o'er the sward. A few words from their leader sufficed to disclose his plan, and then the rangers moved slowly through the intricacies of the wood, passing its deviousities by narrow paths, each horse led carefully. An hour was consumed in this descent, before they reached the valley plateau, and becoming aware that they were in proximity to a larger wood, wherein Yancey's troopers had halted, to await the arrival of their prey.

It was in good time that Jasper and his men were come, for the lumbering carriage was already breaking down the narrow road that bordered the woodland, and here they were fairly in the saddle, shouts and cries reached their ears, announcing the attack. The Sergeant and Matt Blake spurred forward, and in a brief space came in sight of the highway, while a succession of sharp shots were startling the echoes of the forest.

The coach had been stopped and surrounded. A dozen of the marauders were engaged in mastering the black servants, others held the horses, while others were grappling with an aged man, who, with

pistol in either hand, stood by the coach-door, out of which he had apparently sprung to defend it. Robert Atnee was in the act of dismounting, while a negro servant held his bridle, and Yancey, retaining his steel closely, had seized the bridle of another horse, wherein was the quadroon Filippi, apparently bewilbered with the scene. At least a score of the Tory's troops were drawn up in line, at the wood openings, and busily taking part in the fray. One charge was enough for Sergeant Jasper, to reveal to himself. He turned stirrily to his men, and with brandished saber, dashed at their head across the highway.

It was a gallant charge, and in a moment there was a roar. The next was directed upon the troopers who were drawn up in salvo, and a half-dozen of those were driven to the ground in an instant. Wheeling rapidly, the patriot rangers turned upon the trooper line, and after uttering a few more, found themselves engaged in a hand-to-hand conflict with the entire troop of Tories, rallying under their Captain.

Matthew Blake's eye had singled out Atnee, and after the first sweep upon the marauders, he turned to confront the Tory, who remained on foot beside the carriage. Though still scabbled from his

wound, he aimed a deadly blow at his enemy, who parried it with his own blade, and then darted behind the massive coach.

"Coward! Atnee! you escape not thus," yelled Matt Blake, wheeling his horse around, in pursuit. But at this juncture, the negro, who held the bridle of Atnee's horse, fired a shot at the brave's steel, which brought him to his haunches, and Blake rolled heavily from his seat. The next moment he heard Atnee's voice from the coach-box.

"Quack, Juniper! the reins! the reins!"

Matt Blake, disengaging himself from the stirrups, struggled to his feet, in time to behold the carriage rolling away, his enemy Atnee lashing the frightened horses to the top of their speed, while curving them with a firm grasp of the reins. Gnashing his teeth with rage, the cutlass turned on the black, Juniper, who had rendered Atnee such timely aid, and who was now in the act of mounting his master's horse to follow him. A fierce blow of his saber stretched the negro at his feet, and the next instant Blake was in saddle again.

But it was vain to think of pursuing the carriage. A fierce battle confronted him on all sides. More than half of Yancey's troop had fallen, but the remainder were fighting desperately, and five of Jasper's rangers lay dead on the highway. The dusky hollow in which they fought resounded with fatal cries, pistol-shots and saber-strokes. Blake found himself in a contest with three of his former comrades, and beheld his late Captain at a little distance, engaged with Filippa, the quakoon, who struggled in his grasp like a lioness, while he endeavored to manage both her and the restless animal on which she was mounted.

The rambling of the coach-wheels echoed through the woods, and then suddenly ceased. Sergeant Jasper's voice was heard, encouraging the remnant of his little band, and immediately afterward, a Laffezzen red-coated horseman appeared advancing from the direction in which the carriage had disappeared. The Tory partisans set up a huzzah, and Jasper whistled to his men. Matt Blake, hard pressed by the rascals, saw his only chance was in flight, for he recognized the uniform of the new-comers as that of British regulars, belonging probably to the troops of Preston, then on the borders. Spurring the fiery white horse to the utmost, he leaped upon the coach, and began to ride away, his speed increased by the clatter of pursuing troops.

It was now dark, and shadows crept down from the valleys and woodlands, covering the lonely trail. The noise of battle grew fainter, but Matt and Blake heard the hoofs continually following him. Thus he galloped for several miles, still descending into valleys, when suddenly the report of a pistol, accompanied by the shriek of a woman, caused him to check his steed and look behind. Scarcely two hundred yards behind, he saw the quakoon Filippa, with Yancey, the Tory, riding closely after her. The smoke of a

pistol which she had just fired circled over the girl, and Yancey's arm was just descending upon her head. The next instant, she fell from the saddle, and her horse galloped wildly past.

"A dastard blow," muttered Blake, with an oath, as he drove his spurs' heel into the flanks of his steed, which, with one bound, brought it to a stand in front of the Tory leader. But before he could draw his sword to strike, as he intended, Yancey swayed in his saddle and tumbled off, his feet entangled in his stirrups. Thus dragged upon the dusty road, he swept by in a moment, and Matt Blane Williams alone, on the darkening road, with the prostrate form of Filippa lying under his horse's feet.

"Is she dead or alive?" muttered the outlaw, as he threw himself from his horse, and bent over the white-robed girl. She had fallen on her back, and her face, half turned, was covered with blood, which flowed from a wound inflicted by the heavy sword-blade of Captain Yancey. Blake placed his hand on her pulse, and found that it yet beat; then, exerting himself for the effort, he lifted her across the saddle of his horse, and thus suspending her, directed his course from the road, into the deepening gloom of the forest. His quick ear caught the sound of a not-distant waterfall, and with cautious march he proceeded toward it.

It was a mountain torrent, precipitated with incessant roar from the heights of the Hill Fort, over almost perpendicular ledges. Behind it the mountain was cloven, and on either side, the rocky walls were overgrown with masses and evergreens. Blake speedily found a soft moss-grown bank, wherein he deposited his insensible charge, and with water from the canteen, and a few drops from his canteen, soon brought her to consciousness again. But he almost cursed himself for his officiousness, when he heard the first words shaped by her lips.

"Master Robert—thank God—I have saved you! Dear Master Robert!"

"Ay!" muttered Blake, between his teeth. "She is thinking of the step she gave me, for her dear Robert—hal! hal!"

The short laugh seemed strange enough, in that dim place, with scarce light enough to disclose the face of either man or woman.

"Halt!" whispered the call to Filippa; "the girls, they are strong. Take another sop of the spirits, child."

"Who am I?" murmured the girl, weakly. "Master Robert? Master Robert!"

"This no use calling him, he's far away," said Blake. "But you are safe, wench, I'll tell you; safer than with the master who sold you."

"So! so!" repeated Filippa, with a shuddering tremor. "Who is sold?" She attempted to lift her head, but sank back feebley.

"No matter now wench: take another sop, and lie still, till I

wash and bandage that head of yours. 'Twas a savage blow, and might have killed you. Lie still, now."

Thus, roughly performing the part of a nurse, (how different had been his went with another helpless one), Matthew Blake brought water from the fall, and cleanse^t the blood from Filippa's glossy hair—endeavoring to stop the effusion with healing leaves and a portion of his bridle, which had served for his own bandages the night previous. Then, after picketing his horse, and making up a rufo-letter for the buckskin under the sheltering rocks, he went out and sat under the roar of the cataract, with his head buried in his hands, to sink upon his dead Alice.

CHAPTER XII.

ROBERT ATNEE'S SCHEMES.

Full well he knew each mode of guile,
Each subtle snare, each specious wile.—SPENCE.

GATTAN, the negress left in charge of Laurelwood mansion, gazed anxiously after the cavalcade which had passed out of the shaded park to the highway. Many forebodings had the crone that her master was intent on matters which might bring no good to herself and Filippa; for the scene in Robert Atnee's saloon, the night previous, when the quidroon was summoned to drink wine with a brutal guest, had not failed to impress her grim mother with an opinion that some understanding concerning the young slave existed between the Tory and Yancey the trooper. But she had breathed no word of it to Edmon; for she knew that the quidroon's soul was devoted to her master, and that the poor girl would resent a syllable spoken in behalf of her as a curse than trees n to the king.

To Gattan, indeed, the strange passion of her grandchild had long been known, as well as the present whereabouts of Filippa's master, which had caused her to be anxious about her safety. She also knew, that Alice was aware of his slave's character, and that he had often said to her, "I had never availed myself of a single opportunity of trying his strength, but at the old woman's command, and I am used to her commands, and consider him as of nature, which made him the unscrupulous villain that he was. To her he had always shown the 'Master Robert' who had nestled in her bosom in infancy, and whose boyhood and youth she had gloried in. The hard, calculating, plotting Tory had ever veiled his real character in her presence; and it was not marvelous, then,

if she reposed implicit confidence in the promise he had long since made to her, that Filippy should never be parted from her, to go among strangers.

Gatten, nevertheless, was not blind. She remembered how Atree had spoken, on more than one occasion of late years concerning his declining fortunes, and of the expense of maintaining his man, at Laurelwood. She could not think that Filippy must yet be still though never venturing to hint a possibility of it to the master himself. But when Robert Atree set out that morning, with a troop of Captain Yanney, and when Filippy, who was to accompany him, "to meet a lady," as the master assured them, mounted his horse and followed with the Tory's body-servant, Juniper, and Gatten's brain was filled with vague and troubled surmises.

Poor Gatten! she had reason to recall her doubts and forebodings when, on the third morning, the wheels of a carriage rolled into Laurelwood gates, and her master presented himself in the drawing-room, bearing in his arms the form of a lady, pale and insensible, whom he placed in her charge with a few hurried commands. Filippy came not back with him, nor the valet Juniper, and to her inquiries concerning the quæsion, she obtained only evasive replies, which were worse than certainties of the young slave's loss.

But Robert Atree, meekly and timid, took little heed of Gatten's anxiety. He gave directions at once to an old negro, his overseer, to take charge of the plantation, during a long journey which he was about to make, on certain tracks and portmanteaus of his own to be packed, and announced his intention to set off immediately for the seaboard. But, dissimulating to the last, he assured Gatten that Filippy would shortly return, and in the mean time, and until she should hear from him, the household affairs were to be conducted as had been usual during his absences from the estate. At daybreak, the morning succeeding his return, Robert Atree again set out, with the same carriage which he had brought, but with attendants selected from his most valued slaves.

Meanwhile, Gatten had learned but little from the lady confided to her care, and who it she knew as her master's cousin Louise. Influenced by previous illness, the beloved wife of Ernest Renfield had lost consciousness, at the moment when the master was seated in the carriage, and her uncle, so urgent to attend her, had not been present when, it was to the best of her knowledge, Robert Atree, in his usual manner, closed shut the door of the carriage, and drove away. The errand had probably been personal. But, though it was but a short distance, and though it was safe to penetrate, all the windows of the carriage could be seen. A plausible way of arresting her carriage, as it was drawn along by runaway horses, sufficed to account for his presence, and he offered the shelter of Laurelwood, and an escort to Louise, as speedily as possible. Louise was completely delirious, and though she had misgivings regarding her uncle, confided in the promises of her own

in Robert, that every exertion should be at once made to discover him.

The insidious Tory already began to exult in his influence over the wretched mourner, whose beauty, though softened by sorrow, recalled his passion of former years. But Atnee's ultimate object was a more powerful one. He had matured in his mind a scheme which was yet, as he trusted, to place him in possession not only of Louise, but of her fortune. He well knew that the king's forces were still marching for the capture of Savannah and Charleston, as they had already overrun Georgia and the seaboard; and when the day of Britain shall be established, he looked not that his claim to the forfeited estates of his cousin could easily be made good and confirmed with Louise insure for him the undisturbed possession of them. Louise was now in his power, and mysterious of his motives; and he hoped with specious reasonings to reconcile her to long to all his purposes.

"Katherine is out of the way," muttered the plotting Tory, as he went to revolve his projects; "her uncle will be powerless to protect her, and she is but a woman, after all. A few months in the West Indies, till affairs are settled here once more; and then, Robert Atnee, your star will rise."

So passed the master of Laurelwood, as he placed Louise Riviere agla in her carriage, and with courtly gallantry placed himself opposite to her, for their journey, as the deceived lady believed, to her friends in Bankert. The coach passed from the park, and out to the highway, and Gattan, the housekeeper, was once more left in charge of the mansion.

Not long, however, was the negroess to remain alone, for Filippo returned that evening, worn out, as if with suffering. She was received by a dark and travel-stained man, who had, as she averred, preserved her life. But how changed had the quattro become during her brief absence! She only smiled faintly, when Gattan threw himself upon her breast in half-fantic welcome—smiled, and then kiss'd the plain gold ring which always gleamed on her left hand. The man who came with her was moly and silent, and sayeth not to partake of her refreshments, then abruptly took his leave.

The next day Laurelwood resumed its routine, as far as the field servants, under the master, were concerned. But Gattan, the housekeeper, was greatly troubled up with Filippo; and the two, notwithstanding their mutual aversion, remained no longer in the shadow before. It was a dark, rainy night, and the quattro sat down by the fire-side. J. J. Jumper, the black body-servant of Robert Atnee, recently a worthy officer, disabled by a sword-cut, and his master went over to plantations, that Captain Yancey and his troopers had been engaged in a great fight. This was all that transpired at Laurelwood concerning the outbreak of the Hill Fork.

Weeks passed on. Filippo's changed demeanor continued, her health manifestly declining. The strange man who had brought her

back, was seen, from time to time, by negroes of the estate, and it was thought that Aunty Phyllis and some of the field hands knew more about him than they chose to disclose. He was sometimes seen in Aunty Phyllis' cabin, but often might be encountered in the swamp-woods near the plantation burial-ground. Stories were told of his having been seen lying on the new grave, under which "damm' boy" had been buried, and it was said he had never avenged for himself in a cave hard by, where the river skirted a low bank. Meanwhile, Robert Atlee remained absent, and so did his son.

CHAPTER XIII.

ST. AUGUSTINE CASTLE.

The prisoner, clanking his iron chain.—MANNEES.

With reeling senses, and a numbing pain in his side, Ernest Riviere rose to the water's surface, after falling from the *Aeon's* gangway. He had lost his grip of the man who had struck him, and whom he had dragged overboard in his descent; but as he drew breath, on emerging from beneath the waves, the heavens became suddenly illuminated, the waters boiled as a cauldron, and a column of flame shot up, like a volcanic eruption. In the momentary glare he beheld a human face rise near him, and recognized the dark countenance of that gunner at Sullivan's Island, whose life he had saved during the battle. But the next instant a burst opened in the waters, and he felt himself drawn under, as in a whirlpool. When he again rose, it was to find himself in the midst of a mass of spars and timbers, the floating debris of the *Aeon*. He clutched instinctively at a huge fragment of wood, and at the same instant beheld it grasped by another hand, and was borne henceforth onward, the cannoneer.

The two men were almost in contact, as they clung to the timber through the darkness which had so veiled the gloom of the sunless vessel, prevented them from distinguishing each other's features. But Ernest Riviere, as he felt the man's gasping breath so near, could not help exclaiming :

"Comrade, why have you sought my life? I never saw you before yesterday."

"You saved my life, curse you!" muttered the other, savagely.

"Why did you not let the bark do its errand?"

"Unhappy man, I have never injured you" said Riviere. "May God forgive you, and save us both!"

"Offer that prayer for your cousin, Robert Atnee," rejoined the gunner, savagely. "He pays—I stab."

Riviere, appalled at the bitter cynicism of the gunner, would have resented, but he felt the plank to which he was clinging suddenly pressed violently, and the man who had spoken was no longer with him. Immediately afterward, his narrow support encountered resistance, and, ramming against the sides of a large flat-top ship, which was slowly swinging to and fro her anchorings into the rapid stream, he found the gunner gone, a working the capstan far above, and, flung himself out of the water, he raised his voice in a shrill cry for help.

Meantime, though Riviere saw him not, the gunner, who had left his hold of the plank, was swimming vigorously toward the lanterns of a tender which lay at a short distance, and reaching its bow-quarter, soon contrived to make himself heard by the lookout.

Not so easily did Ernest Riviere cause his voice to be heard over the Ha above him, and he felt the strong current bearing the plank which he grappled away from all hope of assistance. Once more, however, he desperately struggled, and was this time answered by a yell "ay! ay!" from the vessel. Then a callousness deserted him, till he awoke to sensibility in the cockpit of Admiral Parker's flag-ship, in the midst of wretched and dying sailors, the victims of that day's dreadful business.

Foul and sore, from contact with the *Action*'s floating remains, Riviere was compelled, during some days, to witness the sufferings of poor writhing, writhing under the surgeon's hands around him. When released, at last, and questioned by his captors, the young pilot made no secret of his share in the conflict of Sullivan's Island; and the result was that he was required to take the oath of allegiance to England, or take the consequences of his contumacy.

"I submit, as a prisoner of war," was his reply.

"Rebels must be regarded as traitors, and can not hope to be recognized as prisoners of war," retorted the Lieutenant.

And he was at once confined on the prisoner's dock, whence, in a few days, he was transferred to a tender, and conveyed, with other captives, to the castle of St. Augustine, in Florida.

Severe and abysmal was the change of life to which the young Canadian in final binds submitted. Imprisoned in close, hot dungeons by night, and forced to labor on the fortifications by day, in lifting huge stones, and wheeling hand-barrows of sand, he recurred to strong and unrelaxed hardships which British tyranny made for its torturous victims.

The laborers were chained in couples to drag-logs, and Riviere found himself paired with a fine, soldierly man, whose gaunt limbs and broad shoulders denoted great bodily strength, though his features were worn thin, his eye overworked and faintly fed. The two toiled and slept together, their skins blistering under the fierce suns, their blood chilled by the night damps. They had but one

consolation in their misery, the knowledge that they were both countrymen and Carolinians.

So passed the weary months, for more than two years; Riviere's hair became bronzed, like that of his older comrade, and a heavy beard covered his youthful face. They had nothing to tell of a brilliant story; but the captain never wearied of listening to his newest yoke-fellow, Tom Irvin, the ranger.

"By the Continental Congress!" the latter would say, his favorite form of adjuration, "this whirling stone, Captain, is wearing to soul and body. Faith, sir, if it wasn't for you, I'd escape or be shot by the sentinel."

"Most likely the latter would be your fate, my brave Tom," the young man would quietly reply. "'Tis not so easy to escape, I fancy, with a sentry's bayonet at every angle."

"I wish I had the butt of a bayonet in my grip, and this chain off, for a few moments, I'd do the business for three Britishers, or my name's not Tom Irvin."

"And be stretched on yonder sand with a dozen bullet-holes through you, poor fellow," rejoined Riviere. "No, my friend, let us wait a while longer yet. Our deliverance will come, in good season."

"By the Continental Congress, Captain, you give me some hope; but here we've been nearly seven hundred days, as I've watched on the rampart, yonder."

The conversation was interrupted by the sound of a drum at the Harbor's mouth; and soon after, the sails of a vessel appeared in the offing.

"More prisoners," cried Irvin, dashing his brown hand over his eyes. "God help our poor countrymen. Are they still fighting, I wonder?"

"Ay," answered Riviere, "and they will fight while a British hireling insults their free soil. We shall yet, Tom, behold our day triumphant."

"God grant your words be true, Captain," rejoined the ranger; and they went on with their talk, in silence, till the hour for parading of their master now well arrived, and they were marched to the barracks. After dinner, it became evident that the ring's estimate concerning the arrival of prisoners was correct; for the ring of unfortunate appear'd in charge of others. Captain Riviere, with his comrade, drew near to the foremost, and the former gazed upon a stout swain in exceeding rags whom he had known, and recognized. "Father!" he cried, scarcely able to speak. "Father! — father!" and the captive, in return, uttered a low cry, and sunk beside him, murmuring: "Larest, my son! my son!"

It was John Riviere, the merchant, who, captured by the British regulars after the attack of Yancey's marauders on his carriage, had been carried to the coast and thence conveyed to a transport bound

for St. Augustine, with prisoners. Here, after two years, the father and son found themselves united in chains, and to John Riviere his lost boy was as one risen from the dead. The meeting nearly overcame the older man, whose health had been already enfeebled by his confinement, and a sympathizing surgeon procured an order for him to rest a day, with his recovered son to attend upon him.

But the joy of their reunion was saddened by that which old Riviere was obliged to relate concerning Louise, the wife of Ernest. Since the moment when he sprang from the carriage, to defend her, the servant had seen no more of his daughter-in-law. Struck down in the road, he awoke to find himself in the hands of enemies, and to bewail the loss of all he loved.

And when Ernest Riviere resumed once more his daily labor on the works with his father, whose tasks he joyfully lightened, and with Irvin, his long familiar comrade, the toil he endured was as nothing to the anxiety of his brain, continually dwelling on the dangers to which Louise must be exposed, alone and in the power of enemies, or wandering he knew not where. Thus were on the doubly-tormented legs of weeks of imprisonment, vainly whittled by mutual interchange of thoughts.

"Tom, my brave fellow, said the Captain one evening, as the captives, with axes and sledges, were engaged in fitting large stones in battered portions of the ancient wall, "let my father hear how you were captured. I'll take us back to home a while."

As Riviere sat there, he heard a sob near him, from an old man, one of the many prisoners, who had been fastened to his fellow by a cross-tether. The two aged prisoners were shoveling sand from a burrow. A following boy, the son of this other captive, was assisting them.

"Well, Captain," replied Irvin, "perhaps your father might like to hear about it; but hang me if I can think on home and old masters without getting all a-fire again the Britishers and Tories. However, it's a short story." So prefacing, the ranger began his relation:

"You see, Captain, I'd all along suspected that cousin of yours, Robert Anne, was a smooth-faced Tory, under cover. So I set myself to watch when he came to camp, (like an old ranger knows best, Captain). Well, about that time a fellow jail us named Bigfoot—was sitting up a cap as a cap of his size ever was. He'd got a long cap on the river, and he was a precious co-wad. I guess the longer he had to sit, and as far pay, you know, Captain, the lower the price he'd fetch, and that under cover too. Well, so I spied on him, Captain, till he took the Pugget out and I made out he'd had his fill, and I guess so, I found out he was odd along with your cousin Anne, and that the two Tories were scheming to tell off all our General's plans to the Britishers. I saw and heard all that, and I waited to make sure. But I kept dark, Captain, till the night Sullivan's Island was reinforced, and I expected

to get there; but I heerd Pappett was going to get leaze, and I dogged him to an old oak-tree, where he met Atree, and handed him some documents. Off they went together, then, and as fast as all have it, I followed, intending by hook or crook, to overtake the Tory and make him deliver the papers. But that was the time the Tory got off, and poor Tom Irvins suffered. I grippel the fellow hard enough, but the devil took keer of him, and I found myself pitched into the mouth of Smith's creek, with a bullet in my shoulder."

The ranger rubbed his arm, as if the shot were there still, and Riviere remarked :

" So you were between drowning and dying by a shot, that time."

" Precisely, Captain; and it was a prelament, I assure you; for the water was deep, the banks were slippery, and my left arm was good for nothing. Howsoever, I struck out with my right, and kept myself floating on the current, and drifting down the channel, past town and fort, and getting to sea rapidly, when, all at once, I heerd ours. " Boat," says I, and boat it was, and a British boat, at that, raising up to reconnoiter our works; but it saved my breath, and so I've got nothing to say agin it."

" And they took you aboard the fleet, to make you fight your own neighbors—eh, Tom?"

" You better believe, Captain, they tried to make me 'list for King George; but they found I wasn't the stuff they like Tories out of, so they pitched me into a tender, and here I am, yokel like a pet lamb, to you, Captain Riviere."

By the time Tom Irvins had concluded his recital, the sunset gun boomed, and the guard approached to release the captives from their log-chains, and march them to their supper and cells. Riviere and the ranger walked erect, though the day's toils had been severe. Old Riviere appeared weary and dispirited; but the aged man, his yoke-fellow, was pitifully weak, tottering along with one hand on the shoulder of his scarcely less feeble boy. His thin gray hairs were wet with huge drops of sweat.

At the doors of their cells the captives received their black bread and some beer, diluted with brackish water. They were then locked in to eat their bitter meals in darkness, after which they could lie down when they liked on the damp straw which was there laid.

Ernest Riviere had petitioned to be allowed to share a cell with his father, but no response had been vouch-sed to his request yet, and he found himself again, with Tom Irvins, in the narrow dungeon, under the fortress, which they had occupied together during nearly the whole period of their imprisonment. The only light that penetrated it was admitted through a slit in walls of immense thickness—a few feeble rays, never sufficient to disperse the gloom.

Riviere and Irvins divided their loaf, and were eating in silence, when the ranger uttered an exclamation :

" By the Continental Congress," he cried, " they're making their

bread out of goose-feathers, I reckon?" And he held up the tube of a quill, which the ranger had drawn from his portion of the loaf.

"Let me look, Tom," cried his comrade, and taking the quill he scrutinized it carefully. "Tom," he said, lowering his voice to a whisper, "this quill is intended for us--there's a paper inside of it."

"What, Captain?"

"George, Tom! I think we have friends in the garrison; for I have already exchanged glances with one of our guards. Now, if I could only manage to read this scrap."

"Put it close to the light," said Irvinus; "your eyes are sharp, Captain."

Irvine drew out a twisted slip of paper from the hollow of the quill, and holding it close to the aperture that admitted them light, contrived to read what was inscribed the following:

SIR—Your father was a merchant of Charleston, and I owe him a great turn. Your pledged comrades will be guard with the writer of this scame, to-morrow evening. We shall have a boat under the wall, and when we strike off your log, just you make for the boat, and we'll drive ye into it. To-morrow night or never—courage and all's well. A FRIEND.

"What think you, Captain—is it a decoy?" asked the ranger.

"Why should they wish to decoy us? No Tom, I think we have friends; but 'tis a desperate undertaking, to escape under the guns of the fort."

"There's not a vessel in the harbor, you know, Captain."

"That is true, Tom. Doubtless this emboldens them. Shall we attempt it?"

"Liberty or death, Captain," rejoined the ranger.

"'Tis desperate—but, Tom, I will ask my father."

The two comrades threw themselves on the straw; but there was little slumber for either that night. The thought of liberty kept them wakeful.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ESCAPE.

Oh, Liberty! can man resign thee;
Once having lost thy glorious name?—MARSEILLAISE.

The morrow dawned, and St. Augustine's castle prisoners were hurried out as usual, in couples, to their task—again to stomp over huge stones, wield picks and craws, and trample heavy barrows. The sun rose over the fort, and so passed the morning.

Meantime, Captain Riviere communicated with his father, and the old merchant, already drooping under captivity, declared that to him death, in the attempt to escape, were preferable to existence as a prisoner. The young man felt his breast alternately swayed by hopes and apprehensions, for he could not but foresee the fearful risks which must attend the undertaking he contemplated; nevertheless, the fear of his father dying in a dungeon, and the thought that his wife was now left without a protector, combined to inspire him with resolution to attempt escaping. Tom Irvin heard the determination with satisfaction. The ranger was devoid of fear, and responded at once.

"Sink or swim, Captain, I'm with you." But, presently his honest countenance fell. "Look here," said he, with a glance toward the old prisoner who was chained with his feeble boy to the same log that confined the merchant Riviere. "What are we to do with these poor chaps? Not give them the slip, I reckon?"

"I fear there is no provision for their escape with us," answered Riviere.

"By the Continental Congress, we can't leave 'em here, Captain. Better let the old boy and his son go with you and your father, Captain, and Tom Irvin can rough it out here a while, I'll be bound. But that old chap, and his son both, will die, if they stay here, that's a fact, sir."

"Tom you must go with me, and the boat may not be large enough for more than—"

"No, Captain; I'll take my chance with the Britishers a spell longer, if so be we can't all get off. You must go, because your father would die without you, and you've got a sweet wife at home to look after, and I'm nothing but an old Indian scout, with an old mother at home. I'll stay, and keep up courage, thinking you'll come back, with Marion or Moultrie, and blow the infernal castle sky high, before long. That's it, Captain, precisely."

"No, Tom, we'll all go. Let us speak to the old man and his son at once."

The two captives heard the proposition with different emotions. The boy almost wept with new hope, and his slight frame straightened, as if capable of renewed manhood. His father's countenance slightly, but speedily became pale again. Tom Irvin was puzzled at his apparent apathy.

"What's up, old gentleman?" cried he; "don't you want to get out of this blessed old rat-trap?"

"Useless!" murmured the captive, shaking his head, dogmatically. "The place is garrisoned day and night at every point. No, we can never escape."

"But you can try," demanded Tom, dogmatically.

"Father," said the captive son, "we can die but once. Better to die in escaping, than be murdered here."

"The lad's right, precisely," said the ranger. "Where's the gol in living like niggers? I say go, if we're shot for it."

"And we may escape, father," panted the boy.

"Precisely," continued Tom. "Nothing ventur'l, nothing gain'l."

"Father, let us venture—let us at least have a try," implored the youth. "Here we will live—every body th' don't."

The aged man treated violently, as he cast a look of unspoken affection on his child.

"I will do whatever you wish, my boy," he whispered. "You are all to me in this world."

The livers turned his head, for his eyes had grown misty. He well knew already that this father had himself his roof-tree fired by British soldiers, and the mother of his boy murdered before him by Indian savages. The wrong had broken his spirit, and left his life hanging only on his love for this youth.

The sunset gun was now heard, and the corporal's guard approached with measured steps. Once more the prisoners felt their muscles drop on the heavy logs to which they were fastened; and then Captain Riviere and the corporal, an Irishman, exchanged glances of intelligence.

"Now," whispered the soldier.

"Now," cried Tom, the ranger. And away, along the rampart-line, toward a point indicated by the corporal's hand, the fugitive prisoners ran swiftly, with the guard in apparent pursuit. As yet they made no noise, and their flight was unobserved. Riviere, grasping his father's hand, felt his heart swell, as he crossed the sunlit moorland. Behind him pressed the yenta, with his feeble parent, both inspired with new strength, in the hope of obtaining liberty. Soon they gained the sea-wall, and then tarew themselves on their faces. The boat rocked beneath on the water, and in a moment Tom Irvins leaped into it and seized an oar. Riviere followed, with the merchant, and the other persons came next, with the British corporal close behind them.

"Come on," cried Riviere. "Freedom or death, now brave comrade."

"I'm with you, my boys," responded the Irishman, springing over the gunwale. Two seconds later he was upon the wall.

"Ho," exulted the corporal. But the two hastened and drew

"Yea, if you're fightin' at all, haul over yer guns," cried the boy. "I'll do; and I can just as well. I know, and I'm in command of one of them. The other fellow's gun is too far off; and immediately afterward a musket report was heard on the opposite shore, where wall'd a sentinel. The flight was discovered, and there was nothing left but to row for their lives."

"Away, men," shouted the corporal, regaining the boat. "Pull, pull, ye devils, or we're all dead men."

The fugitives needed no second order. They bent upon their oars, and drove the light boat quivering into the channel, while behind them riddled a discharge of bullets, and the roll of a drum in the castle. Away flew the boat, sailing through rapids, toward the harbor's mouth; and as the men strained to their work, each with a sweep of the oars easier to keep as it were from the water, while a current setting swiftly seaward, accelerated its speed.

"Pull now, my boys, for your life and liberty. Look at the black birds chasing us. But never mind the bullets; now pull."

As the brave corporal spoke, a shower of lead fell around, and a body of soldiers were seen embarking to pursue them. As yet, they were inside of the battery's range, but would soon reach a point commanded by all the seaward armament of the fort. At this juncture, a moaning swell was heard on the surface of the water, becoming louder near the harbor's entrance. At the same time a great cloud rose from the horizon, spreading over the rising waves with pall-like blackness. Mounting higher, it seemed to swallow the twilight; and the men knew that it foreboded one of the sudden storms which rage so terribly on the coast of the Floridas.

"We are in range of the guns—the grape battery," cried one of the British deserters, in a frightened tone.

"Never you fear," replied the bold corporal. "If they scatter grape or canister, they'll be after hitting their friends, I'm thinking." He pointed to the pursuing boats, which, though somewhat scattered, were all exposed like their own frail craft to the castle guns.

"Pull away," again shouted the corporal. "Never mind the grape-shot, till it hits ye, my lads."

The twilight was disappearing—the bleak cloud extended its shadow; but the pursuing boats were gaining rapidly, and the runaways could hear behind them a summons to surrender. But to the right had they now but to escape or perish.

"Pull," cried the corporal, in deeper tones, and his oarsmen swept their oars unflinchingly. The foremost of the British boats was now within musket shot, and her officer was heard again commanding a surrender.

"Bring me, or I'll shoot you," he shouted. They tried to answer, but pulled harder. Then came a volley of musketry, followed by a cry of anguish. Ernest Riviere, supporting his father, and grasping the boat's tiller, felt that cry puncturing his heart; for it was the voice of the bold old captain which had uttered it; and who now strained to his bosom the bloody form of his young son.

The last gleam of light rested on the waters, and upon the desolate, gray-headed old man, who had sunk to the bottom of the boat, holding the boy in his arms. The youth's eyes were upturned to his

fire's face, and he pressed his delicate hand against his side, where a dark stream was pouring fast.

"Father—we are—free!" murmured the boy, with a last effort, and then sank back gently and was dead; with a smile of peace upon his lips, as if indeed he were free forever.

The corporal glanced in the boat's wake toward their exulting pursuers, and clutching his oar, looked back.

"I've no heart to kill me gallant allies," he muttered, as he raised the piece to his shoulder; "but I'll shoot that officer, as I'm living—in." He fired as he spoke, and the British Lieutenant fell back at the tiller, which he was holding.

That shot was the salvation of the fugitives; for the pursuing boat, losing the guidance of her rudder, spun around in the rapids, and became presently unmanageable.

"Pull, my lads, pull!" cried the corporal.

And as he grasped his oar again, a heavy roll was heard on the waters, increasing the feeble artillery of man. It was the thunder, crashing from the overhanging cloud, like ten thousand cannons, and shaking the earth under its reverberations. The frail boat rose and quivered like spray upon the billows, then plunged forward like a grayhounds, cut off the black maw of the harker, to the wide Atlantic ocean.

CHAPTER XV.

THE OCEAN TORTURE.

Water, water, everywhere,
Yet never a drop to drink.—COLEBRIDGE.

A STORM upon the Florida coast is a battle of all the elements. Fire, air, earth and water, meet and dispute for the mastery of man. Terrible reefs and breakers have the wind-bidden waves, and the dark sky sweeps down to catch the gale and thunder. Such a tempest overpassed that frail boat, fraught with death and life, which was swept out into the open sea, with its puny human passengers left for tenantless at the billows. The escaped passengers receded from the race of man, but such as nature was still in their power.

The corporal and Tom Irvin, with the two other rowers, drew in their oars, and clinging to the gunwales, suffered the boat to drift before the gale. Riviere grasped the tiller, endeavoring to keep the prow seawards; at the same time that he sought to shelter his feeble father from the gusty spray that rose in drenching clouds

on either hand. The darkness became so dense that no one could see another face, and there was no word spoken by any one.

In the bottom of the boat, the old prisoner, whose son had been shot, lay like one dead, clutching his marlboro boy—his arm wound about the cold neck, his lips pressing the pale, life-reddened. Neither wind nor wave, nor the roar of tides, seemed to disturb him. The troubled senses could realize but one sound, the death-sigh that had made him childless.

Thus, during the long hours, the fugitives clung to their frail bark praying, yet scarcely daring to hope, till the morning dawned, and by degrees the storm abated. Land was no longer to be seen, and how far they had drifted it was impossible to say. All around was a wide stretch of ocean, glistening under the first glimmerings of day. Not a speck of land nor ship in the distance was to be discerned, in all the watery desert.

As the sun rose above the horizon, the men began to look one another意味ly in the face, and their glances fell upon the dead old man at their feet, clinging to his bloody burden.

"Murder! but this is dreadful," muttered the Irish corporal.

"But we are, at least, free—all of us," responded Riviere in as steady a voice as he could assume.

"Ay, and we must be men, and not give up, cried the corporal, suddenly rousing himself. "What d'ye say, b'ys? 'Tis true, we've nayther chart nor compass, but we've the sun to steer by, and the coast can never be far distant, I'm bould to hope. So let's pull stoutly, sou'-easterly, and we'll make land before we think of it, b'ys."

The man who had pulled with the speaker laid hold of his oar, but his strength was unequal to the effort of wielding it.

"I'm beat out, Corporal Nevens," he said.

"Let's have a bit and a sup," rejoined the corporal. "Come, men, our biscuits will need no salt this bout."

The three deserters then produced from under their wet jackets a scanty store of provisions, three hard biscuits apiece; to which the corporal added a canteen of rum.

"We've got seven months so we must make seven meroles," said Nevens; "and a sip of the liquor for each. What say you, sir?" he asked, addressing Captain Riviere, who was supporting the head of his father.

The corporal's cheering voice and manner inspired his comrade with hope. Riviere nodded in assent to his proposition, and a single biscuit was divided into seven equal shares.

Meantime, the boat tossed up in the rough waves, and the child stray lost over its low gunwales. This in was an hour or more, and its weight and the waves were gradually borne by the swelling tides, as they passed out of the sun-parallel. As yet, the old man at their feet had not lifted his head from the corpse, nor glanced once at the others. He cowered, as he had fallen forward, with his boy, to the boat's

bottom, his arms locked about the body, and, save for a shivering gasp, at intervals, might have seemed to be dead himself.

Riviere bent over and whispered to the corporal.

"The poor youth must be buried."

"There's a bit of sickness in the bows," responded the Irishman. "We might wrap the poor lad in it, and say the funeral service over him, sir; if so be you recollect it, sir. I'm afraid I don't, more shame for me."

"We can at least say a prayer," said Riviere, solemnly. "Will you speak to the old man?"

Corporal Nevens touched the father lightly, and gently signified his desire; but the bereaved man looked up fiercely, and drew the body closer to his breast.

"The sun is getting high," here interposed Riviere; "by noon the heat will be intense, and the body can not then remain near us."

"The Captain speaks truth," now spoke Tom Irvins, who was at one of the oars. "We must let the lad into the deep. And it is better, all honourable," he continued, laying a hand upon the unhappy parent's shoulder, "better for the child to be *there* than in a dungeon; he will, with his last whisper, you know, be *free*."

The word "free," which had been the last on his boy's lips, caused the slave man to break forth in more natural grief. "He's free!" he cried. "Yes, my boy is free! Oh, God!" And a torrent of tears gushed from his eyes over the dead one's face. The sympathizing men around participated in his sorrow, as they looked upon the youth's white forehead, his soft brown hair, hanging damp and heavy, and his eyes veiled by their long lashes.

"His soul is free, indeed," murmured Riviere. "Would that we were all secure and happy as this child!"

The old man's tears were a relief to his half-crazed brain. Presently, he raised himself on his knees, and covering his features with his attenuated fingers, appeared to pray with inward fervor, for a few moments; then, turning to Riviere, said, in a measured voice:

"Bury your dead!"

The young patriot felt his heart smitten by the words, for he reflected that but for him the boy and his sire would not have shared the flight. Tom Irvins marked the shadow on his Captain's forehead, and quickly whispered:

"Not your fault, sir; 'twas I that tempted the poor lad. And I don't regret it. No, thank God! He's free, and better off than we are."

"Ay," said Corporal Nevens. "Who can say what will become of each and all of us? or, more to the point, what that lad have escaped? Who knows?"

No more was said, save a prayer, which Riviere offered, as the body, wound in a strip of canvas, and made fast to a heavy musket, was committed to the sea. The father wept no more, but sat silently.

in the bows, his arms folded, his eyes closed. The sunbeams fell upon his gray hairs, but he took no heed; all that had warmed his withered heart was now cold.

At noon, another biscuit was divided, and a share professed to the old man, but he quietly put it away. The flask of spirit was placed to his lips, only to moisten the parched skin. He would not drink. But his solitary fragment was laid by, while the men cut and their own scanty portions, and wet their mouths with a sup of water. This was the last of the second biscuit.

They now began to sink under the extreme heat; for the sun hung over them like a ball of fire. They had labored at the oars since day-break, but could yet distinguish no land, and as their energies became exhausted, the hope of gaining the coast grew feeble. It was evident that the gale had blown them into the channel of the Gulf Stream, and, after taking counsel with each other, they decided that it was better to remain in the current, which ran at the rate of four miles an hour, taking a northerly course, in which it was likely they might encounter some vessel.

But the night approached, and long hours of cloudy darkness transpired bringing heavy chills, to succeed the tempests by day. Next morning they divided another biscuit, and continued to row up, with the muskets and their jackets, a sort of screen to shelter them from the direct rays of the sun; but this could not prevent the excessive heat from parching their tongues and throats. At first they had talked to cheer one another; and Corporal Never-shall-tell-his-story and recalled to the elder Riviere, how, years before, a poor private soldier, in the garrison at Charleston, had been sentenced to the lash for some trivial breach of discipline, and had been pardoned through the interposition of the good merchant, who, being on a visit to the commandant, commiserated the poor soldier, and begged his release. " 'Twas yourself saved me from the lash, sir," cried the corporal, "and I have never forgot it. So here we are tog ther, sir."

But as the hours dragged on, the conversation of the fugitives dropped altogether, and they only looked in each other's faces, endeavoring to exchange sickly smiles—all except the childless old man. He never moved from the bows of the boat, nor seemed to heed the sun or chill. And so another day wore away, and to land nor a stir could be discerned. At evening a breeze arose, as they divided their fourth biscuit, and after awhile the moon arose, shedding her silver beams, which had been veiled during the preceding nights.

They even slept at intervals, but with uneasy dreams, from which they started sometimes, with sullen cries. Fatigue and thirst were breaking them down, and it was noticeable that the men of powerful frames, Irvin, Corporal Never-s, and one of the privates, suffered more than Riviere and his father, and the other private, a delicate man. The corporal's weak fingers trembled as he parted the fifth biscuit, at daylight. Bitho-learted Tom Irvin snorted faintly, and

tottered as he received his share. The old man still refused his fragment of the bread, nor would even taste the small remnant of spirits, though Riviere held it repeatedly to his lips.

The third day was one of horror. The red sun seemed to rain fire upon them, scorching marrow and blood. They looked fiercely at each other, and read in their dry eyes what no tongue could speak —the thirst for water! Thirst! terrible thirst! the torture of the camel in another world; the fire unquenched; the undying worm, gnawing and never appeased.

And still neither land loomed, nor a sail appeared.

When night came, the remaining bread was divided, and they ate the last morsel, and drained the last drops from the canteen, hardly expecting or caring for the next day. But hunger and thirst remained with them, and when another day dawned, and the sun rose high, and the heats beat on them, they were all starving men. Happily, one was delirious. The childless old man, who had refused to eat, and yet survived, was lying in the bottom of the boat, talking about his boy, and calling him pet names. "We'll be happy, my Nelly," he murmured. "We'll escape and go back to your mother." And he kissed the phantom of his crazed fancy, and patted the cheek, and parted the brown hair of his shadowy beloved one.

When the fifth day came, there was a strange glare in the eyes of all, and the two privates mumbled together, and whispered to the corporal, and Nevens spoke to Riviere, and afterward bent over the old man at his feet, to see if he was dead yet, for his comrades had spoken about that to him. For the first time, since his son was buried, the bereaved father raised himself and spoke; and his voice, though he had not eaten during four days, was stronger than that of Corporal Nevens. He looked at the two soldiers, and at Nevens, and at Ernest Riviere, who supported his father in his arms, and muttered:

"Do you want one to die for the rest? Let us cast lots, then."

The five men shuddered, but in more than one pair of eyes the cannibal already glared. Life was sweet, and hunger and thirst were more potent than humanity.

"Let us begin."

Seven threads of different lengths were separated from a soldier's jacket, and were then knotted together in a ball, with seven ends protruding. Each man clutched one of the fatal threads.

He who drew the shortest must die for the others.

Slowly the knotted ball was unwound by Corporal Nevens. One by one the threads separated. Then the comitales measured the tresses. That which Ernest Riviere held was the shortest. He had drawn the lot to die!

"I am ready," said the young Captain. "Father, may God preserve you!"

"No, no, Ernest!" the old merchant feebly articulated, "let us all die together! Let us—" He sunk back, speechless and apparently dying.

And then it was seen that the eyes of the other father in that doomed boat were glittering as with triumph; as if he thought his boy's death was to be avenged.

"I am ready, comrades, God forgive us!" murmured Ernest Riviere.

But Tom Irvins, the ranger, feebly lifted his hand, and gasped for utterance. "Me, Captain?" he articulated. "Me! I—I'll die!" and then fell back exhausted.

Riviere bared his breast, saying: "I have drawn the death-lot—I am ready to die!"

As yet no one stirred, but every eye glistened again over the waste of waters, in the desperate hope that a sail might appear. But naught was to be seen, on any side; and presently the old man spoke up:

"I have the knife!" he ejaculated, sharply; and raised in his hand the knife which had divided the biscuit. "I am the priest!" he added, with a hollow laugh, while Riviere bent forward, presenting his bosom to the stroke. "Away!" cried the maniac old man. "I am the priest and the victim!" And in a moment the knife which he brandished was sheathed in his own withered breast. He fell to the bottom of the boat, and his last words gushed with a stream of blood from his lips; "Nelly, we are free!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BOAT ON THE OCEAN.

O'er the blue waters of the boundless sea.—YEOMAN

The little brig *Ranger*, as staunch a privateer as ever displayed the Stars and Stripes at her mast-head, commanded by a gallant Captain, and manned by a brave crew, was cruising on the coast of North America, and picking up stray merchantmen bound for H. B. H. West India possessions, when her look-out suddenly gave the announcement:

"Sail, ho!"

"Ay, ay!" responded the First Lieutenant, from the quarter-deck. "Where away?"

"A boat, sir, on the larboard quarter—no open boat, sir."

"I see—an' full of men," cried the officer, as he took to his spy-glass. "After her course a point," he called out, addressing the man at the wheel. And in a few moments the *Ranger* was bearing down upon a dark object tossed upon the water, when, on

nearer view, appeared, as supposed, to be a boat filled with men. But to the loud hail of the foretopman no answer was returned.

"Can they be all dead, Mr. Forester?" said Captain Wallings, the *Ranger's* skipper, approaching his First Lieutenant.

"I think I can see a movement, sir," answered the officer. "Ay, they are making faint signals. Man the pinnace, there, and pull off to them—lively there!"

The ready arms of a half-dozen stalwart seaman sent the pinnace skimming over the waves, till it ranged alongside of the drifting boat, and a dismal spectacle was presented to their gaze.

Before them lay three lifeless bodies festering under the sun's rays. Two of them were clothed in British regimentals, and the other, which had been outlived, was that of a greyhaired man. Four persons survived, lying together, under a ragged canopy of garments, in the boat's quarter; and one was able to move his hand to them, ere he sunk back exhausted.

The privateersmen made fast to the boat, and towed it to the *Ranger*. Then, carefully and tenderly, the four fugitives from St. Augustine were lifted to the vessel's deck, and conveyed to her cabin. It appeared as if the last sparks of life were trembling in their emaciated frames, till a sponge moistened with spirits, and placed to their mouths, recalled more animation, and gave the ship's doctor some hopes of their recovery. But his utmost skill was taxed, and many hours passed before he ventured to pronounce them beyond the danger of immediate dissolution.

Riviere and his father, strange as it seemed, grew better before either Irvin or the British corporal. The two privates had died raving, after satisfying their animal cravings, and the survivors had resigned themselves to starvation, when Providence interposed for their relief. In a few days, however, under the humane care of their preservers, all were able to thank heaven for renewed strength, and Riviere recounted to Captain Wallings and his Lieutenant their story of captivity and suffering. The brave seamen shuddered at the details, while they congratulated their countrymen on their bold escape.

"And this British corporal—he is a determined fellow," said Captain Wallings.

"Brave and resolute, sir; and I shall never forget his devotion, nor that of my friend Irvin."

Works of art, however, follow the rescued captives with restlessness, till strength returns. Meanwhile, the pinnace rolled up and down, before light gales, till one evening the cry of "A sail!" was heard, and a vessel was sighted upon the windward beam, which was soon identified to be a large brig, with all sails set.

"We are in the channel now," said Captain Wallings, "and I think we cannot get a finer harbor than Bimini for the *Bulweris*."

"It is not a bad situation, sir," replied the First Lieutenant, whose gaze was at his eye, "she has, nevertheless, a half-dozen months to speak with us."

"Armed, Mr. Forester?"

"Yes, sir; with at least our own metal," answered the second officer. "Doubtless a letter-of-marque, as she is merchant-rigged."

The war-irons beat to quarters, and the men piped aft by the boatswain, when a few words from Captain Wallings sent them with alacrity to the guns. In a brief space the decks were cleared for action, and, a smart breeze springing, the privateer was soon able to overhaul the strange sail.

"There goes a gun," cried Mr. Forester; "and there's the bloody flag of King George running up."

"Lay along, abe, at once!" cried the Captain's cheery voice. "Board, and carry her, Mr. Forester!"

It had been late in the day when the chase began, and the sun was descending to the ocean's rim when the two vessels ranged yard-arm to yard-arm, flunting the respective flags of England and America defiantly at their mast-heads. Immediately the combat began, with an exchange of broadsides, mingled with the wild cheer of Britons and the wilier Yankee hurrah. The grappling-irons were then thrown, and Captain Walling's bold crew swarmed over the enemy's bulwarks.

At once took place a hand-to-hand conflict, such as was frequent in the fierce encounters of privateers in those days. The combatants grappled, discharging their pistols, and engaging with cutlasses and boarding-pikes, in deadly strife for the mastery. The letter-of-marque's crew, though unprepared for the sudden boarding attack of the privateersmen, nevertheless defended their vessel gallantly, and almost repulsed the first onset. Again the Americans advanced, once more to be hurled back on their own decks, and yet a third time, to return raging to the battle.

"Away, larrakers, away! Men of the States, give not an inch this time!" cried Captain Wallings.

"Forward, to repel boarders!" shouted the British skipper, in reply. "Sweep the Yankees from your deck, hearts of oak!"

But the Yankees had rouse up their minds, this time, to remain, though they had unfeigned the face of their enemy greatly, and after a few minutes of fierce rivalry, the Britons retreated, step by step, on the slippery decks.

"Now, boys, can't you the Continentals?" cried T. J. Irvins, the lancer, who fought at the right hand of Captain Walling.

At this instant, First Rover dashed forward at the head of his crew, and cast his eyes with the rest of the crew, but to yonder American started, in surprise, to behold him in his uniform and face of Robert Atnee, his cousin.

"Last night we received news that he had been received on board the *Jester*, and the dark words uttered as last, when I was retained to the memory of Robert, and he went to his gun, had arm in horror. But the recognition was as sudden on the part of his felon cousin. Robert Atnee started back, as if struck by a bullet."

His eyes glared from their sockets. There, before him, with sword uplifted, stood him whom he had believed buried fathoms deep beneath the sea. He gasped, and felt his hanger sinking from his relaxed grasp; then, overcome with terror, he turned and fled, at the instant that another rush of the privateersmen drove the letter-of-marque men across the decks.

Ernest Riviere, appalled for an instant, speedily regained his faculties and started in pursuit of Atnee's flying form. He saw him disappear at the companion-way, and without hesitation, plunged after him into the cabin beneath. But it was silent and deserted, and rushing forward, he encountered a heavy curtain. Grasping his sword more firmly, Riviere tore the drapery open, and beheld, not Robert Atnee, but a female, kneeling upon the floor, in prayer. She turned her head as he entered, and uttering a loud shriek, stretched out her arms, and fell at his feet.

It was Louise—it was his wife!

CHAPTER XVII.

ROBERT ATNEE'S PERIL.

From strand and soil, that lurid light
Gleamed baleful through the night,

The Phantom Ship.

The privateersmen following their bold commander, soon forced the letter-of-marque to surrender; and her colors were hauled to the deck by no other hand but that of honest Tom Irvins. The vessel's Captain had fallen mortally wounded, and half her crew were dead or disabled. But at the very instant when the sullen survivors flung down their weapons, in token of surrender, a wild cry rose from stem to stern that the vessel was on fire, and a moment after, flames and smoke were seen issuing from the hatchways. Captain Wallings gave instant orders for returning to his own vessel; and now Tom Irvins, for the first time, beheld at hand of Captain Riviere, whom he had last beheld in the heat of conflict. Rushing back and forth, wildly impaling for his example, the brave fellow was astounded to see the young man suddenly burst from the companion-way, bearing in his arms the lifeless body of his female.

"There, mark the lad, you're safe!" ejaculated the ranger.
"The brig's afire! Abandon her, for God's sake!"

"The magazine—the magazine!" here rose from a dozen throats, as friends and foes crowded to the gangway, and peered over the vessel's side to the *Ranger's* decks. In a brief space, all but actu-

ally dying with their wounds were transferred to the privateer, and her lashings being cast off, the American vessel swung loose, and dropped to leeward. Ernest Riviere, with his precious burden, sought the cabin which Captain Walling resigned to him, and the victorious officers after securing their prisoners, prepared to restore the trim craft to her usual career and discipline.

The sun had now sunk below the horizon, leaving only a golden duck upon the waters. As twilight crept up, and crimsoned the sky changed to sable, the letter-of-marque fell off on the *Ranger's* quarter, and began to burn vividly. The flames broke from her ports, and ran up her masts and spars, until she soon presented a sheet of flame, which illuminated the ocean for miles around.

Once or twice the privateersmen, as they listened, fancied they heard a shriek arise from the doomed vessel; and some averred that they saw figures running over the burning decks. And so she drifted over the waters, while the *Ranger*, with all sails set, rapidly left her behind.

But there was, indeed, one survivor of that day's fight, whose despairing voice rang over the deep from the decks of the burning brig. Robert Atnee was there, alive, yet blasphemously cursing his existence. Overcome with sudden and superstitious fear, he had fled from the face of Ernest Riviere, and sought retreat below; but unheeding his course, he had missed a step in descending the companion-way, and pitched headlong from the ladder, falling soundly upon the floor. Rapidly following, Ernest Riviere, in descending to the obscurity of the cabin, had not perceived the prostrate body which had fallen to one side, and the discovery which he subsequently made, after drawing the curtain before him, banished all thoughts of Atnee, or of weight else than his reverent belief. Consequently, the wretched Tory remained insensible and bleeding where he had fallen, till, aroused by smoke and flame, he gazed his feet to find the brig deserted and on fire from stem to rudder.

It was a desperate situation, and the heart of Robert Atnee sank within him, as he ran from point to point, to escape the blinding smoke and dreadful heat, which still seemed starting to pursue him, as the vessel swung around. A breeze was rising with the night-clouds, and it rarel passed through the flaming shrouds like the blast of a furnace. Atnee's clothing and sarcenet were snatched, and his throat grew hot with parched misery. In the starlight he saw for the first time directly to the sea, and all the cold elements had necessarily before him. Now at last, the Tory was not slow to jump without a struggle, and though the fire roared everywhere about him, and his hands were crisp'd and buried in the coals he contrived to bring one of the vessel's late spars to her topmast, and securing some large sailor's thimbles to its bowsprit, he held himself with this frail raft, upon the broad bosom of the ocean.

The blaze of the levated letter-of-marque cast its glare on all sides, as the night wore on. Atnee, he gaunted his raft away with a frag-

ment of plank which he had secured for the purpose, could survey the expanse of waters for miles around; and he fancied he beheld the white canvas of the *Ranger* afar on the edge of vision. He gashed his teeth as he recollects his late encounter with Ernest Riviere, and the avenging fear which had constrained him to fly before the man he had wronged. Then, reflecting upon Luisa, he wondered, in his fever thoughts, whether she had been discovered by her husband, or whether, as his perverse nature prompted him to hope, she had been smothered in her cabin on board the letter-of-marque.

The burning vessel, meanwhile, was smouldering far in the distance, on the water's edge, and darkness presently settled around the Larroo raft to which Atnee had fastened himself. He crouched partially upon his knees, in a painful position, fearing momently lest the swish of a wave, as the sea rolled, might sweep him from his frail support. Thus, through the long hours of night, tossed hither and thither, the wretched man swayed on a shoreward current, till the gray light of morning enabled him to discern, apparently very near, the sharp points of a line of reefs, and beyond a stretch of sandy shore.

The prospect of speedy deliverance banished at once from Atnee's mind a thousand reflections which had racked it during the darkness. Conscience ceased to worry him with her reminiscences, and despair gave way to resolution. He grasped the strip of plank which he had secured to the hatch, and employing this as both rudder and oar, began to urge his way toward the reefs.

But the shore which loomed so near, through the early mist, seemed to recede before advancing morning. Hours of hard toil, under the torrid blaze of the sun, were required to bring the raft within the outer reefs, and there the swell of the breakers threatened to submerge its miserable freight at every turn. All the hours of light were consumed, and when night came again, the Tory sunk exhausted on the hatch, his hands and limbs bleeding from contact with jagged reefs, and his body nearly paralyzed from his exertions, without food or drink, through the long day. But during the darkness he was cast upon the sands, and when midafternoon appeared, found himself saved at least from the peril of drowning.

Weak and famished, Atnee eagerly devoured the contents of a few rambles which he dug from the beach, and set out to explore his whereabouts. He saw woodlands in the distance, and after some hours of toilsome travel over the arid sands, reached a forest of stately pines, and shortly afterward the rude habitation of a turpentine-maker, where he found shelter and rest for the day, and to his satisfaction ascertained that he was on the mainland of Georgia.

Here, though fain in his aims, and flung, after losing all, like a weed back on his native shores, the Tory congratulated himself that life and strength remained with his plottng brain. Here he had leisure to reflect upon the certainty that Ernest Riviere was living as well as the brave Matt Blake; and he doubted not that the young

Whig would soon reach his friends in Charleston, perhaps with his recovered wife. Jealousy and hatred tormented his evil thoughts, and he imagined a hundred ways of circumventing or destroying his cousin, each in turn to be discarded as futile. Thus passed his waiting hours, while sojourning in the humble dwelling where he had sought shelter; and no sooner was he able to proceed than he set out for the interior. He had a few doulbeens in his belt, which he had saved with his watch and some jewelry; and with the money he purchased a horse whereon to set out for Laurelwood, which he ascertained to be but a couple of days' ride from the headland where he had been cast ashore.

Robert Atnee never before experienced the chagrin and bitterness which now assailed him; for he had been accustomed to make every thing bend to his crafty schemes. Heretofore he had reckoned confidently on the ultimate possession of his cousin's property, but he now saw almost insurmountable obstacles interposing. His mind became a chaos, as he journeyed toward Laurelwood, but above all its tumult the one thought ever came uppermost—that Ernest Riviere must be got rid of—and that without delay, and surely. How or by what agency he could not resolve upon; but the circle of his reflections always returned to that point, and as the pivot of his wicked hopes in the future.

Sunset, on the second day of his journey, brought the master of Laurelwood to the banks of the river which ran through his own lands. He had but five miles to ride, and his way led by a pleasant road, skirting the stream, and bordered on the other side by woods which fringed the marshes. The afternoon had been hot, but a cool breeze arose as the sun was descending, and freshened the sultry atmosphere. The river surface reflected the purple cloak, and a golden haze filled the forest, through which the last sunbeams were smiling. Robert Atnee took no note, however, of the scene, but rode onward, absorbed in thought, till suddenly, as he reached the borders of his own estate, where could be seen some low hillocks of the swamp burial-ground, a hand was laid roughly upon the bridle of his horse so that the animal reared abruptly. Keeping his seat with difficulty, Atnee raised his leather whip to strike at the wild figure which had sprung into the highway; but in another instant he was seized and jerked fiercely from his saddle.

"Murder! help! help!" cried the Tory, with a stifled shriek, as his throat was compressed beneath an iron grip; but he was answered by a peal of laughter, which rung horribly through the woods, and as he lifted his eyes, he saw the face of Matthew Blake close to his own, and the outlaw's eyes glaring upon him in malevolence.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FILIPPA IN THE CAVE MILL.

A dram of poison—such soon
As will disperse itself throughout the veins.—SHAKESPEARE.

But it had closed over the plantation of Laurelwood, the ~~serv~~
~~slaves~~ were in their quarters, and the mansion was dark, except a single apartment, on the ground-floor, where Gattan and Filippa sat together, at a table—the old negress plying her needle, while her grandchild, resting her forehead on one transparent hand, appeared lost in silent reflection.

"Mother," said the girl, looking suddenly up, "do you think Master Robert will ever come back?"

"Please the Lord, yes," answered the crone, raising her wrinkled face with a faint smile. "He'll come back, and—"

"May it mother—he will bring his bride with him. Let us hope so, mother."

"To be sure, dear—if you wish—and we must hope for all happiness to our good master, Filippa."

The quadroon leaned back in her chair, and began to toy with the plain gold ring which gleamed on her forefinger. Gattan watched her attentively, and presently spoke again:

"You had the ring, Filippa, even if the vile trooper had carried you away, child. Would you have feared to use it, Filippa?"

"Fear I, mother?" cried the quadroon, lifting the ring to her lips, and kissing it, "what has a slave to fear in death? When you give me this ring, mother, I promise you it should be my protectress against dishonor, come in what shape it might. I never forget that promise, mother."

"Filippa," said Gattan, with a curious expression in her glance, "what if our master—if Robert were to offer to harm his slave?"

"Alas! he can never harm me more than he has," replied the girl, sadly. "Yet—against him even—I would not fear to kiss the ring, mother—for the last time."

Uttering these words, in a low, melancholy tone, the girl slipped the ring from her finger, and pressing her nail upon its spring, caused the little circle to open, disclosing a hollow filled with some white substance, which she regarded closely.

"'Twas a good gift, mother, and sometimes I am happy in thinking it will give me a great sleep, when my heart can no longer bear its load. When you go, mother, Filippa will not be long in following you."

"No, child; you are young, too young to leave the world. Life is for the youthful."

"But a slave has no life, mother."

"I have been a slave for seventy years," answered Gattan. "I have suffered as a slave, and yet I am old and cling to life."

"And you loved once, mother?"

"Did I love?" muttered the crone, absently. "Ah, you say well. I did love, and your mother, my child, live I also, Filippa."

"And I love—alas!" murmured the slave girl.

She bowed her head, in speaking, pressed her small hands to her heart, and closed her lips, as with a spasm. But at this instant a tap sounded on the casement outside, and the crone started.

"Filippa, 'tis the wild trooper, the crazed man again."

"He will not harm us, mother; he wants food, perhaps. Poor, miserable man, he were better off to be with his child in the grave he watches all night."

The girl, she spoke, had risen from her seat and approached the casement.

"Have care, Filippa," cried Gattan, following her. "He may do us mischief."

"There is no fear, mother. Did he not save me once?"

Thus speaking, Filippa threw open the blinds and discovered the crouching figure of Matthew Blake, close under the sill; his long, shaggy hair hanging in elf-locks about his face, and his eyes gleaming like coals of fire.

"Hist," muttered the maniac as Filippa drew near the window. "I want you; I have found him."

"What is it, Matt? Who have you found?"

"Come," responded the man, jerking his head, and pointing out through the darkness. "He is there, you know;" and then, in a shrill whisper, he added: "He sold you, you know—sell you for the other one."

"Oh, heaven!" murmured Filippa, pressing her heart with her hands. "Master Robert is come—do you hear, mother? Our master."

"Hist," muttered Matt Blake. "we are to have a feast—the red wine; we will drink the health of the dead. Come. I must away. I can not wait."

"I will go with him, mother, there is meaning in his words. Our master—Robert is in danger."

"No, Filippa, do not go. I fear this wild man; he is more dangerous than you think."

"Then I must go with him. I have power over him. Let me go, mother. Master Robert may be nigh—perhaps here."

Thus speaking, the quail-broom flung a shawl over her head, and called out, "Matt, Matt, I will go with you."

The old negro vainly interposed her arm. Her impulsive grand

child had darted to the corridor, and was hurriedly following the madman, Matthew Blake.

The moon was struggling through gray clouds, now obscured, and again emerging, but with uncertain light. Matt Blake, grasping the girl's slender fingers, drew her on along the dusky avenue of trees; and over to the edge of the wood, which skirted the negro-quarter. He stood under the shadowy boughs, and through the dimmed paths in silence, traversing the sloping ground which descended to the river and meadow. Flippa spoke to him twice, but he barely turned no answer, except to tighten his grasp of her wrist. Thus they kept on for half a mile, till they reached a pitch of cleared earth and gravel-ground, when Blake forced his way between dense masses of trailing plants, which grew rankly on both sides, and stood with his companion before a vacant building.

It was, as Filippa remembered, the locality of an old mill-house, near the river, which had long been deserted. The structure was of stone, and had been strongly built; but the stream had fallen and deprived it of water-power years before, so that it became useless. The walls were overrun with creeping vines, and the great wheel lay flat down like a skeleton, as the fitful moonbeams glimmered through it. But the low windows of the building were red with light, and as the girl thrust open the heavy door, and drew her over the threshold, she saw that the room into which they entered was illuminated by several pine-torches, which cast their resinous glare around, and filled the beams above with dense smoke.

But there were other objects in the room, another in particular which riveted Flipp's gaze. In the center of the room, she saw a table of rough pine, with a torch flaming at one end. A bottle and half drinking-cup stood on the board, and a rude bench was beside it. On the floor, at a little distance, lay a human figure, bent double, and apparently bound hand and foot to a post which supported the roof. As the queenen passed, Lewellen and foreboding, this figure writhed and seemed gasping for breath.

"Hah!" laughed Matt Bree, and halting in the glare of the firelight, holding Filippo's hand in his iron grasp, he pointed to the stagecoach. "Look you there, mistress, look you yonder, by yon window. Is he—shall I not promise you?—'tis the master that sold you for the other one."

"No, my child" murmured the slave-girl. "Tis Robert."
"He will I trust" said the Bravo. "He will never see you again, he will never sell you again for gold. Come, let us drink to the health of Almudena." He drew the quidroon to the table, and forced her to sit beside him.

"Let's, wench, have some wine to make the heart merry. You are free to say I will never sell you again."

"Matt, oh, Matt, you will not harm him; he has never injured you, Matt."

The quadrigon murmured these words, scarcely knowing what she

said, all her thoughts concentrerel on her master's situation, her eyes fixel upon the living heap in the corner, which app'red convulsed with contortion. But, in spite of her abstraction, she shrunk from the look which Matt Blake gave her, as he muttered, savagely :

" Wench, if he had a hundred lives to lose, they'd never be enough for Matthew Blake's revenge."

While the outlaw spoke these words, the wild gl'ore in his eyes gave way to an expression of deriding hate; and Filippa became aware that a settled purpose was conceived in his crazed brain. But in another moment, his laugh broke out, and, seizing the bottle of wine, he filled the solitary cup and stoutly :

" Pledge, wench, pledge! You'll never be sold again, I'll promise you. Drink, drink, I say." And he placed the cup to her lips.

The quadron felt her heart sinking, and her brain becoming giddy; but the sight of her master, writhing in his terrors, and at the power of a frantic enemy, called to her mind all the craft and resolution of her race. She suddenly seized the wine-cup, and echoed the outlaw's mad laugh.

" Ha! ha!" she cried, " let us drink, Matt. He will never sell me again." And she turned her large eyes upon him, brilliant as with joy, and kissed the rim of the cup.

" Good," cried Matt Blake; " you are a brave wench, Filippa—eh, Filippa they call you, my girl? Come, fill up; there's more where this came from."

Again he filled the vessel, and then hurled the drained bottle at Atnee's pinioned body. It struck the post and shivered into fragments. At this moment the quadron slipped from her finger that heavy gold ring which she wore, and lifted her cup again.

" Matt, the wine is good," she murmured, softly; "'twill make us happy."

Blake took the drinking-bowl, but he saw not the poison'd ring which lay at its bottom. He drank, and returned it to her lips, with a tender grimace.

" Good wine glads the heart, wench," said the outlaw. " Filippa, you shall see how Matt Blake can hate, and how he can love, too, if it like you. I've store of wealth, wench, fit for the best lady in the land. Ha! wench; do we not suit one another? Kiss the cup again, lass." Filippa raised the vessel and drank slowly.

" We must have more—in the bottle, wench," he exclaimed. " But by-and-by—now for business."

He drew, as he spoke, a long, thin-bladed knife from his bosom, and held it at it in the torch-light. Filippa uttered a stifled scream, for she recognis'd her own master, with whom she last met the night before, intent to stay for dinner in the supper-room. The truth, which she had never suspected, flashed instantly over her mind, that Blake and the assassin were identical. But she mastered her agitation with a great effort.

"Let us drink again, Matt, my veins are on fire," she exclaimed, clasping the bravo's hand, and leaning her head forward, till it touched his broad breast.

"Plenty, wench, plenty," responded Blake; "but we'll first—aha! what is that? My veins are burning too, I swear! What's that roar in my ears, wench? May the devil—"

"Matt the wine is good; let us have more."

As Filippa murmured thus, she wound her arms about the man's neck, and gazed up in his face with a look of well-maintained passion. The half-insane half-brutalized wretch could not resist the expression of these dark, lascious eyes, that seemed swimming with strange affection. He threw his arm about her slender waist, and pressed her to him, and bent to kiss her red lips. But at this instant Filippa snatched the stiletto and sprang to her feet.

"Not my master!" she screamed; "not Robert, but yourself!"

"Wench! What's this—what's this flame in my eyes?" Blake rose to his feet, unsteadily. "Where are you, girl? 'Tis dark, the torches are going out."

"No, Matt; 'tis the darkness of death; you are poisoned," replied the quadroon.

"Poisoned!" echoed Blake, with a yell, as he dashed his palm across his eyes, which were dim as with blood. Filippa sprung from the table, uplifting her stiletto, but too late to elude the bravo's grasp. He raised upon her, and with his huge frame staggering, fell with her to the ground. Twice her stiletto rose and twice it was sheathed in his breast, but he wrested it from her hand, as it was aimed for a third blow, and clasping her pulsing throat with his fingers, forced her white teeth apart with the point of the weapon.

Filippa was like an infant in the powerful man's grasp. She offered no resistance, as he dragged her to the table, and seizing the cup from which he had drunk, drew the few drops which remained in it, together with the poison remaining, into her gasping throat.

It was Matthew Blake's last look; for even in the act, his massive chest collapsed, he drew a spasmodic breath, and fell heavily upon the floor.

Slowly and painfully Filippa raised herself, and beheld the bravo's lifeless features close beside her.

"I have kill'd him," she murmured, "to save Robert."

The exclamation, while the swift flame began already to consume her, caused the deadly stiletto, which was clinging to the post, several times to drop when she emitted her last groan. His mouth was distended by agony, and as she relieved him from it, the blood followed in a distinct stream.

"Avon, Master Robert—'tis I; you are saved!"

The Terry's breast heaved convulsively, and his frame still writhed in agony. Filippa tenderly lifted his head, and wiped the blood from his lips. At last he opened his eyes.

" You are saved, Master Robert." She pointed to the dead brave, lying under the glare of the torches.

" Ha!—Matt—devil!" groaned the Tory, as he began to recall his situation.

" And—I—I am dying, Master Robert."

" Dying?"

" This only could I save my master. Twice have I saved thee, dear Robert."

She sighed and sank back. She had indeed given her life, poor girl.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE LAST STRUGGLE.

Though all the fiends to whom thou art sold
Rise to thine aid, I'll keep my hold.—W. SCOTT.

On the 12th of May, 1780, the British captured Charleston, from which their armies had twice been repelled. The American garrison marched out with the honors of war, and many Wragg families retired with them, leaving the exultant king's men to possess their homes.

And when the last detachment of Americans had departed and foreign sentinels tramped their rounds from Cooper to Ashley river, there might have been noticed the figure of a man skulking in the dusk of twilight, near a bluff that overlooked the water.

This skulking man was Samuel Pappett, the former spy, who had since become a camp-follower of the British army under Prevost.

Never, since the brief glimpse he had caught of that glittering casket which Matthew Blake, the brave, glanced over in his secret cavern, had the recollection of the treasure been absent from Pappett's thoughts. Seizing on nothing, his memory reverted to the ravishing spectacle of unroll wealth his eyes had beheld for a moment; and in my a project had no turned to return to Charleston, even while the city remained in possession of the patriots. But courage overcame his stronger desire of safety, and the spy had harkened to the still voice of conscience, whose voice he had banished and passed as a traitor to the cause. What's all this now?

But at last, Samuel Pappett followed the flag of his British protectors to Charleston, and on the night which followed the capture of the city, a night favorable for his purpose, being dimly with threatening clouds, he cautiously made his way to the bank which had sheltered Matt Blake's cabin, now deserted and in ruins. The

spy's hear' work as he groped his way to the spot where he had concealed himself, three years before, while Robert Atree entered the bravo's dwelling, but the locality was so picture'd in his mind, that he found no difficulty in discovering, under thick masses of tangled vines, that narrow crevice through which he had peered into the hollow bank. He had provided himself with a pick, and lost no time in widening the aperture, so that in a few moments it was large enough to admit his body.

But here, an accident, which was nearly fatal, thrille'd the man with new terrors. The displacement of earth with his pick had jarred the entire bank, and as he was about climbing to the opening he had effected, a great mass of clay parted, and fell with a heavy smash into the river, leaving him scarcely a foothold where he stood. Pappett shrunk back, aghast, but avarice soon asserted her dominion, and he prepared to follow up his work, which had now in fact become easier, since the mud which had partially exposed the whole cavern. He cautiously placed his feet on the crumbling dust, and dragging himself to the interior, hastily struck a light with tinder and matches wherewith he had not forgotten to provide himself.

Where, now, was Matthew Blake, the bravo and pirate, to guard that treasure, gained by many a crime? Where were the potent evil spirits still to brood over ill-gotten gold? Pappett, the coward, crept on, pausing every second and holding his breath to listen. But he heard nothing but the wind and river moaning. All within the cavern was as the grave.

At length, the spy, dragging himself on his knees around the cave, felt his hand slide into the aperture where he had seen the bravo thrust his casket; and presently his pulse leaped as his fingers came in contact with its rusty iron lid. The coward grew brave in lifting the chest from its hiding place, and he could have faced a regiment, as he hugged it to his bosom.

But suddenly a grating noise, as of a door turning on rusty hinges, and a tread as of feet advancing, caused a chill of terror to curl the rascal's blood. In another instant he saw the glimmer of a light strike across the cavern, and then, with a muttered cry, he dropped his own dim taper, and, clutching the casket tightly, crawled toward the outlet.

The damp, slippery clay seemed to give from under him as he crawled, and presently he heard the voice of a man venting a loud curse behind him. He redoubled his exertions, and succeeded in reaching the brink of the passage, still gasping the chest, as with a vice. Here he paused, for immediately below ran the dark river, and above were black, hurrying clouds, driven across the sky. He gazed at the cool air, and drew himself cautiously up, but as he did so, a heavy hand fell upon his shoulder.

At another time, Pappett would have abandoned every thing for flight: but the possession of the treasure made him desperate, and while he hugged it with one hand, he drew a knife from his belt, and

struck furiously a backward blow at his pursuer. A groan answered him, and the grasping hand slackened but only for a moment. Another grasp was laid on his arm, and he found himself grappled by the man he had wounded.

At this juncture, while the two closed in a deadly embrace, a rift in the heavy cloud, permitted the May moon to look out for an instant, and illuminated the river, the dark bank, and the struggling men. Samuel Pappett beheld a hand, armed with a dagger, suspended above his heart. He saw, too, and recognized his antagonist, though his features were grimy as those of a corpse. It was his ancient employer and confidant—Robert Atnee, the Tory.

The uplifted arm descended, and Pappett felt the cold steel penetrating his bosom. He shrieked in horrible accents, and sunk back, but relinquished neither his hold of the casket, nor his clasp of Atnee's garments. Atnee in vain essayed to shake him off, and again and again he buried the dagger in his breast; but the wretch still clung to his treasure, answering only with shrieks, till at last they staggered and slipped forward, the earth trembled beneath the feet of both, and they tumbled into the black river.

Leaves and brush and loose dart covered the water, and for a few moments Pappett and his enemy struggled amid the debris, and then sank together. The spy never slackened his dying gripe; and thus ended the life of Robert Atnee, the Tory.

CHAPTER XX

CONCLUSION.

The pleasant mansion of John Riviere, the merchant of Charlston, had been illuminated with oil faces returned again, and called to well-remembered footsteps and music of happy voices. Officers, gathering around Ernest Riviere and his fair wife, had listened to the story of captivity and perils which the elder Riviere was privileged to relate, when he sat with his children in their ramblerured room. Madeline and Marion, and other relatives, had come to jingle with the full groups, and ever frank greetings were inter-

rupted when, after a happy year, the re-united family retired from before the invading British, and sought shelter in Canada; and when, after fighting four years under the eye of General Washington, Ernest Riviere saw the last army of King George surrender to the patriot chief; and when, at last returned to his ancestral domain, a blooming family clung about the young colonel's knees, the

Story of Moultrie's defence, of St. Augustine prison, of the hatred and plottings of Robert Atlee, lost none of its interest, but was told and retold till it became a household legend of the Carolinas.

And when the war was over, Tom Irvin, the ranger, who had fought under the Swamp-Fox Marion, and the British corporal, Nevens, who had tales to tell concerning Paul Jones and many other brave comrades, came and rested under the vines and orange-trees of the old mansion; to join in the thanksgiving of the young Republic, and bless the proud banner of freedom—the Stars and Stripes.

THE END.

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The Young Girls. Fourty girls.
The Young Men. Forty males.
The Young Girls. Forty girls.

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The Four Friends. For four males.

The Five Friends. For five males.

The Six Friends. For six males.

The Seven Friends. For seven males.

The Eight Friends. For eight males.

The Nine Friends. For nine males.

The Ten Friends. For ten males.

The Eleven Friends. For eleven males.

The Twelve Friends. For twelve males.

The Thirteen Friends. For thirteen males.

The Four Friends. For four males.

The Five Friends. For five males.

The Six Friends. For six males.

The Seven Friends. For seven males.

The Eight Friends. For eight males.

The Nine Friends. For nine males.

The Ten Friends. For ten males.

The Eleven Friends. For eleven males.

The Twelve Friends. For twelve males.

The Thirteen Friends. For thirteen males.

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Keepings to old English tunes. 2nd time.

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take place before the Fowl comes
to age. It can be seen
when it has Seven days and two males.
All males that have been ill will become
The Generous Jew. I have seen
Scaly Egg. For Locomotor and the like.

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The early. A colony of three
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The 'O' girl. A Colleyay. For two males.
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Banting school. Two males and two females.
Please for the pugge. For two males.

Two views of the Collage. For two females
Two views of the Collage. For two females.
A large collar. A Party or vest. Sangria
Two views of the Collage. For two females.
Collage looks good. The best looks.
Festive. The best looks.
The dignity. A collage. & two boys.
Gives two expressive. For two males
Collage looks good. For two persons.
Festive. The best looks.
Nostalgic. A collage. For two males
Collage looks good. For two females.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 3.

The King of Peter Sloper. For seven boys.

Concerning the graph. M. has and found
it to be of great improvement. I have
and will send you three sets, & I hope
you'll experiment with them.

I have had a few moments to think over
the first suggestion. The basic, via which
we can do it, I think, is this.

Whether I or you demand any compensation

DIME DIALOGUES No. 9.

A few days of help. Four males & four females.
A few days of greetings. 2 males
1 old and the new. Four females one male.
Choice 1 female. Four females two males.
The same. 2 old and 2 new males.
Four males. Four females.
Four females. Four females and males.
A few days of help. Four females.

~~T~~ - The orchard in front. For two females.
~~S~~ - The orchard. For two males and females.
Brothers and Cousins.
~~C~~ - The orchard. For two.
T - The orchard. For a number of girls.
T - The orchard. For three or four.
T - May queen (No. 2) for a number.
M - The orchard. For a number of girls.
- Girls will be given the basket. For boys.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 10.

Mr. May Twain's son, George, now of the
City of New York, has written a book
entitled "The Life and Times of Mark Twain,"
which is a very interesting history.

DIE DIALOGUE 3 No. 11.

For male and female.
For male and female.

The next afternoon. For two little girls.
A schoolroom. For two boys and two girls.
I am seven years old now." Seven girls
A schoolroom. For three boys.
I am seven years old now. For three boys.
I am seven years old now.

DIME DIALOGUES NO. 12.

so I wanted, For several characters
I was young. For two girls,
most precious heritages. For two
sons, I was old.

וְיַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־יֹאמְרָה לְךָ וְיַעֲשֵׂה
וְיַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־יֹאמְרָה לְךָ וְיַעֲשֵׂה
וְיַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־יֹאמְרָה לְךָ וְיַעֲשֵׂה
וְיַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־יֹאמְרָה לְךָ וְיַעֲשֵׂה

RIME DIALOGUES NO. 13.

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Wife, not worth. For four boys and a teacher.
Niece, not worth. For one and two etc.
The wife is not worth. For two.
A husband is worth. Two wages and a few etc.
of N.Y., the fortune-teller. For three girls.
Mother. For several little boys.
Mother is bad. For several little girls.
A good fortune-teller. For two boys and girls.

Dime School Series—Dialogues.

DIME DIALOGUES, No. 20.

The wrong man. Three males and three females.
A little in care. For two little girls.
Ned's present. For four boys.
Jugement. For teacher and several scholars.
Telling dreams. For four little girls.
Foolish love. For two boys.
Lovers' quarrel. Two males and three females.
A bit of French English. For 3 or several children.
A poor Victoria. For six little girls.
"Sobie" for three boys.

An old castle. For five males and three females.
City manners and country ways. For three girls
and one boy.
The busy day. For two girls and teacher.
Not one there! For four male characters.
Not print. For numerous characters.
Keeling coopers. Two males and three females.
A cure for gout. One male and two
two creditable Miss-a-cro. For two males.

DIME DIALOGUES, No. 21.

A successful donation party. For several.
A little bit of danger. For three males and
three females.
How I like my child. For two children.
How I mind my property. A doctor.
How I do in business. For four females.
I once enough. For two males.
Worth and wealth. For four females.
Waterfalls. For several.

Mr. Hart's return. For four males.
Catherine. For several characters.
London. For Aunt Nancy. For three females.
What a lost wife. Three letters of advice and
advice to recovery. For three males.
The day of judgment. For three males.
Country customs before they were learned.
For four males.

DIME DIALOGUES, No. 22.

The Dark Cupid; or, the mistakes of a morning. For three males and two girls.
That Never-does-well; or, a brother's lesson. For two males and two females.
Honesty; or, the new man. For two girls.
Strong incentives. For two boys.
The king's answer. For four girls.
A practical exemplification. For two boys.
Miser's life in America; or, Xmas '71. Frenchman. For four boys.
Dixy's diamond. For males and females.
A green man; or, the jewelled bank. For two
ladies and one gentleman.

Father's banquet. For a number of children.
It will be boys. For two boys and one girl.
A rainy day; or, the long-expected punishment.
For three young ladies.
Glasses. For a number of characters.
The way to success. For two males and females.
Young Vic. As character, name unknown.
For two.
The little doctor. For three girls.
A sweet revenge. For four boys.
A May day. For three.
From the old to the new. For 10 males.
Heartache. For two girls.

DIME DIALOGUES, No. 23.

Rhoda Went's ramble. For 3 males, 1 male.
How to get a record. For two males.
Greedy and Gracious. For two boys & girls.
The planted and the sown. For two females.
Doesn't pay. For two males.
Company manners and some impertinence. For
two males, two females, 1 male & 1 female.
The pallbearers. For two, 1 male.
Unfortunate Mr. Brown. For 1 male, 6 females.
The real cost. For two girls.

A bear garden. For 10 males, 2 females.
The busy bees. For four girls.
Children. For several characters.
A little. For the young.
Health care. Of good characters and abilities.
Dr. Dougald. Several characters, unknown
name.
Richard Wilson. For three males, two females.
Lover's joy. For several males.
Pedants all. For four females.

DIME DIALOGUES, No. 24.

The goddess of liberty. For nine young ladies.
The three graces. For three young girls.
The seven sisters. For seven females.
A star in secret. For three girls.
An unjust man. For four males.
The long journey. For 3 females.
The old miser. For 3 males, 2 females.
What is worth for it. For four girls.
The old. An old man, 2 boys, 2 girls.
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 553 The Boy Miners. By Edward S. Ellis. Ready October 9th.
 554 Blue Dick. By Captain Mayne Reid. Ready October 23d.
 555 Nat Wolfe. By Mrs. M. V. Victor. Ready November 6th.
 556 The White Tracker. By the author of "The Boy Miners." Ready November 20th.
 557 The Outlaw's Wife. By Mrs. Ann S. Stephens. Ready December 4th.
 558 The Tall Trapper. By Albert W. Aiken. Ready December 18th.
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